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ABSTRACT

This book is intended for the person who has had 100-200 hours of language training in Kpelle, a language of Liberia. The text has six parts: (1) an introduction to the languages of Liberia, including charts and maps showing the distribution of African languages, the location of Liberian languages, and indications on the relatedness of the languages; (2) a lengthy instruction on a method of learning a language on one's own; (3) instructions for native language tutors; (4) a short reference grammar summarizing the basic grammatical structures in Kpelle; (5) a Kpelle-English dictionary; and (6) a description of the sound system of Mande languages and instructional material on learning the sound system of a language. (AMH)

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KPELLE

A Reference Handbook

of

PHONETICS, GRAMMAR, LEXICON

AND

LEARNING PROCEDURES

BY

by Sharon V. Thach
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for

THE UNITED STATES PEACE CORPS

at

THE AFRICAN STUDIES CENTER

of

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

1981

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INTRODUCTION

Most language textbooks are written with a presumption that the language would be taught under the auspices of a trained and experienced language teacher. And while this situation does prevail in the teaching of European languages, such is not the case with the lesser-known languages of the third world, particularly outside the walls of higher learning.

In the learning of African languages, it is more frequently the case that language teachers are untrained (owing to the minimal demand for such teachers) or that the learning situation is outside the classroom. Although I have no access to statistics, my impression of Peace Corps language training is such that even with 100-200 hours of language training, the learner will need additional study before being able to use the language with any facility.

Thus, it is the reality that much of the learning of African languages will inevitably take place outside the classroom in situations that are in some ways ideal, but which lack an experienced language tutor. It is this reality that gives rise to this volume for it was written for the learner who has the commitment to further his/her language study, but who lacks the general knowledge of how to proceed. It is the purpose then to give the learner the sufficient skills and knowledge to be able to carry out the orderly study of a foreign language on his/her own.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE LANGUAGES OF LIBERIA

In addition to English, which is widely spoken in Liberia, there are three major groups of languages spoken there: West Atlantic, Kru and Mande, all of which are subdivisions of the Niger-Congo branch of Niger-Kordafanian, the largest grouping of languages in Africa (see figure 1).

The Kru languages, spoken in both southern Liberia and the western part of the Ivory Coast, include the following Liberian languages: Krahn, Bassa, Kru, Grebo, Dei and Kuwaa (also known as Belleh). The West Atlantic languages are spoken from Liberia north to Senegal and include the Gola and Kissi, spoken in the northwestern and northern parts of Liberia respectively. These languages are virtually surrounded by languages of the third group known as the Mande languages. This group covers a much larger area than the other two, including not only the above-mentioned countries, but Guinea, Upper Volta and Mali as well.

The Mande languages have a Western branch and a (South)eastern branch. Mano and Gio (hard g) are Southeastern Mande languages spoken in Nimba county. The Western branch has two sub-branches, Northwestern and Southwestern. Both Vai, spoken in the Cape Mount area, and Manya (also known as Mandingo) spoken in the border area between Guinea and Liberia are Liberian languages of the northern branch. The other branch contains a set of very closely related languages called the Southwestern Mande languages of which only Loko is spoken outside of Liberia, in Sierra Leone. The rest, Mende, Bandi, Kpelle and Lorma are spoken in the northern part of Liberia.

The location of the Mande languages in Africa is shown in figure 1, the location of the languages of Liberia is shown in figure 2, and figure 3 shows how these languages are related.

FIGURE 1: THE DISTRIBUTION OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES

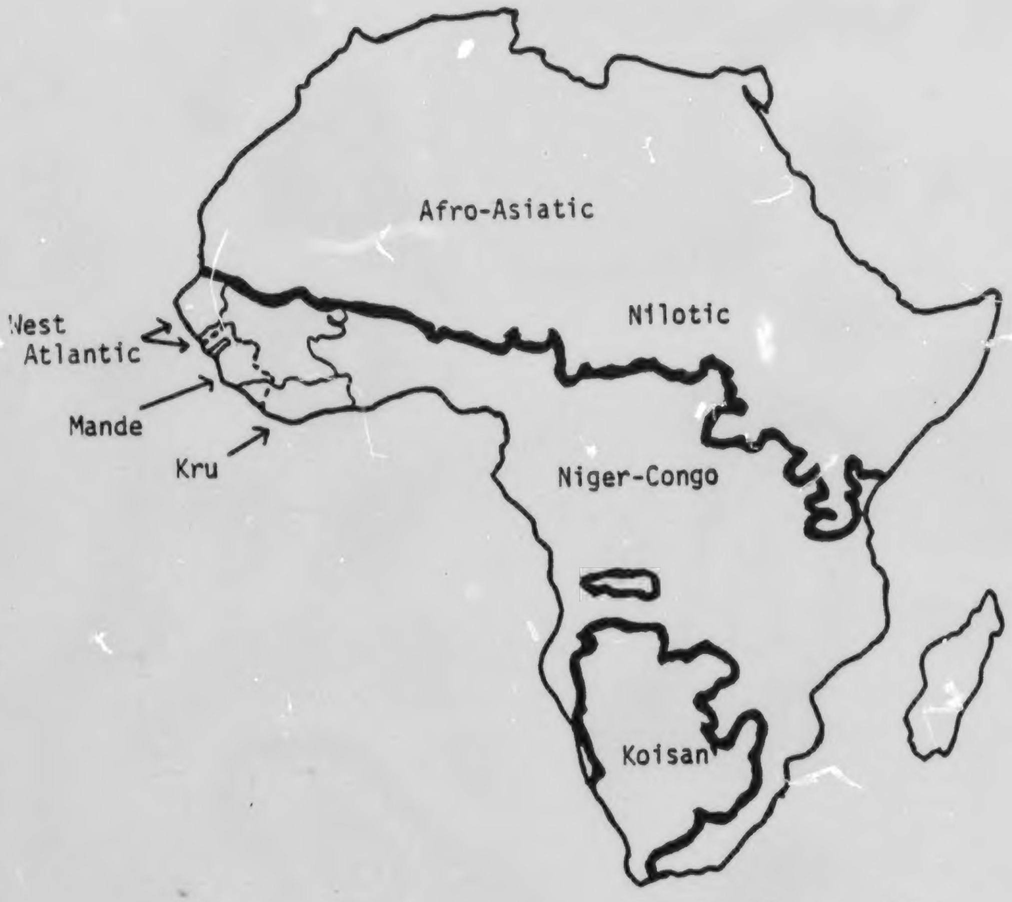

FIGURE 2: LOCATION OF LIBERIAN LANGUAGES

(from Liberia in Maps, von Gnielinski (ed. 1972)

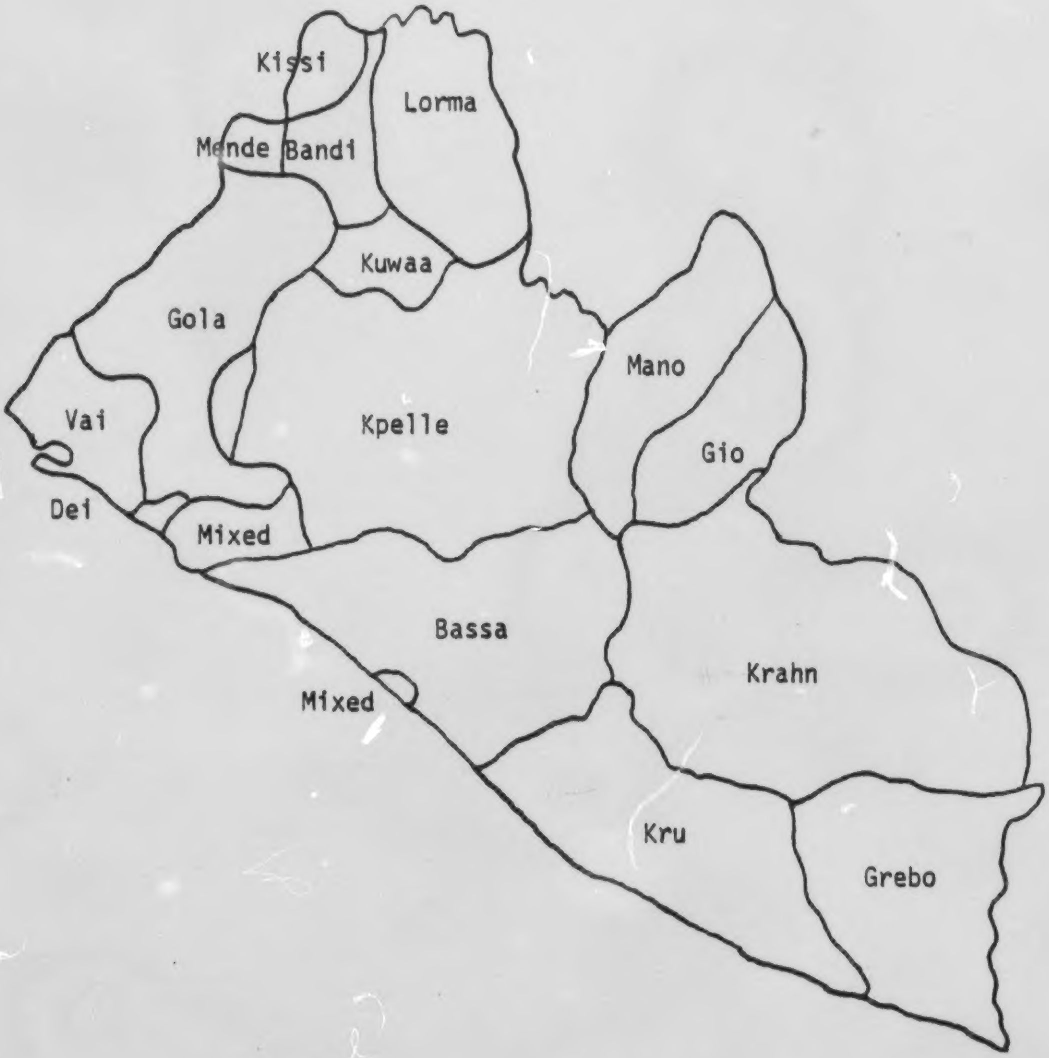

FIGURE 3: THE RELATEDNESS OF THE LIBERIAN LANGUAGES

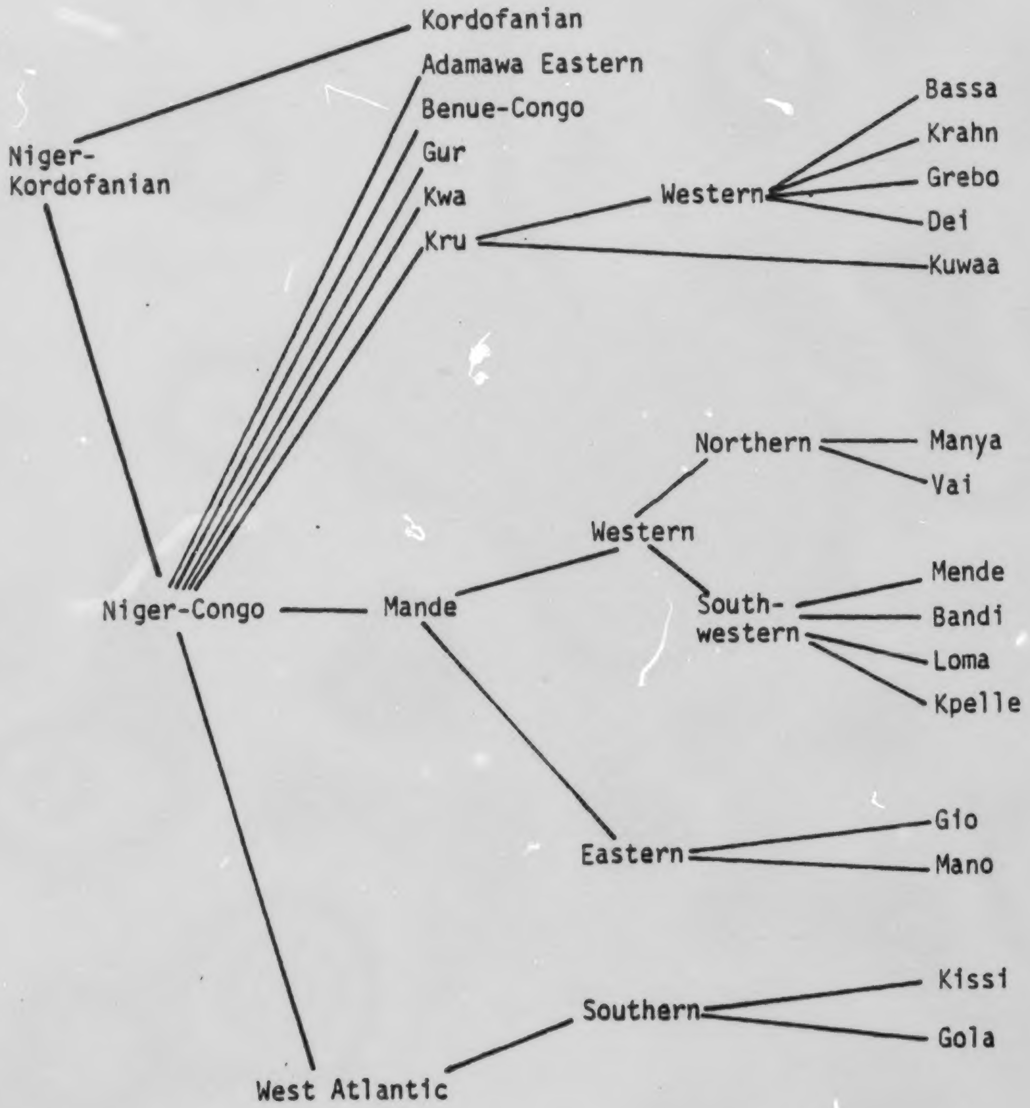

FIGURE (4A)

Indo-European correspondences from Greenberg (1957:42)

LANGUAGE	ONE	TWO	THREE	HEAD	EYE	EAR	NOSE	MOUTH	TOOTH
Breton	ünan	dau	tri	penn	lagad	skuarn	fri	genu	dant
Irish	ẽ:n	dɔ:	tri	kjan	su:lj	kluəs	sre:n	bjal	fjakalj
Welsh	in	daɨ	tri	pen	bləgad	klist	truin	keg	dant
Danish	en	to:?	tre:?	ho:dhə	ejə	o:rə	nä:sə	mon?	tan?
Swedish	en	tvo	tre	hüvud	öga	öra	näsa	mun	tand
Dutch	e:n	tve:	dri:	ho:ft	o:x	o:r	nö:s	mont	tant
English	wən	tuw	θrij	hed	aj	ihr	nowz	mawθ	tuwθ
German	ajns	tsvaj	draj	kopf	augə	o:r	na:ze	munt	tsa:n
French	œ̃, yn	dö	trwa	tɛ:t	œ̃l/jö	orɛ:j	ne	buuš	dã
Italian	uno, una	due	tre	tɛsta	ɔkkjo	orekkjo	naso	bokka	dɛnte
Spanish	un, una	dos	tres	kabesa	oxo	orexa	naso	boka	diɛnte
Rumanian	un	doj	trej	kap	okju	ureke	nas	gurə	dinte
Albanian	n'ə	du	tre	kokɔ	sü	vesh	hundə	goja	db[illegible]
Greek	enas	dhjo	tris	kefáli	máti	aftí	míti	stóma	dbóndi
Lithuanian	vienas	du	tris	galva	akis	ausis	nosis	burna	dantis
Latvian	viens	divi	tri:s	galva	atss	auss	deguns	mute	zobs
Polish	jeden	dva	tši	glova	oko	uxo	nos	usta, gěba	zöp
Czech	jeden	dva	tri	hlava	oko	uxo	nos	usta	zup
Russian	adjin	dva, dvje	trji	galava	oko	uxo	nos	rot	zup
Bulgarian	edin	dva	tri	glava	oko	uxo	nos	usta	zəb
Serbo-Croatian	jedan	dva	tri	glava	oko	Uhɔ	nos̬	usta	zub
Finnish	üksi	kaksi	kolme	pa:	silmä	korva	nenä	su:	hammas
Estonian	üks	kaks	kolm	pea	silm	wilja-pea	nina	su:	hammas
Hungarian	ed	ke:t	ha:rom	fÜ:, fej	sem	fül	orr	sa:j	fog
Basque	bat	bi	hirÜr	bÜrÜ	begi	belari	südÜr	aho	orts

FIGURE (4B)

Some West African Language Correspondences

LANGUAGE	ONE	TWO	THREE	EAR	EYE	MOUTH	TOOTH	HEAD	NOSE
Fulbe	do	ɗiɗi	tati	nofru	yitere	hunnuko	nyiire	hoorɛ	kinal
Biafada	numa	bihe	biivo	nufa	-girɛ	musu	keede	gaga	-sini
Themne	-in	rɛŋ	-sas	lens	-fɔr	-seŋ	-sek	-bump	sot
Limba	funte	taae	tatat	ifa	-ifa	-foti	tiiti	kafa	peren
Kissi	pelɛɛ	miÜÜ	ŋgaa	nilen	-ifɔ	sondoo	kinde	bolɛɛŋ	milindo
Bullom	bul	tin	ra	niu	-hɔl	nyɔhɔl	chaŋ	-bol	-min
Gola	gun	tiel	taal	kenu	efɛ	onya	kesia	edi	emia
Bambara	kileŋ	fila	saba	tulo	nyiŋ	da	nyiŋ	kuŋ	nun
Dyula	keiẽ	fla	saba	toro	nyadɛn	da	nyi		nun
Kuranko	gɛlɛn	fla	sawa	tule	ye	de	namen		
Manyakan	kɛlɛ̃	fila	sawa	tolo	nya	da	nyi	kÜ	nũ
Kono	ŋkele	fela	sawa	toro	ya	daa	ŋirɛ	kun	nun
Vai	dondo	fela	sagba	tolo	ja	da	nyiŋ	kun	suŋ
Sosso	kedeŋ	firiŋ	saxaŋ	tuli	yęę	dɛ	nyinni	xÜ	noɛm
Loko	ngila	fele	sawa	ŋguo	ŋgau	nda	ngongɔu	ngu	hokpa
Mende	ita	fele	sawa	ŋgoli	ngahÜ	ndo	ngongolu	ngu	hokpa
Bandi	ngila	fele	sawa	ŋgoli	ŋgasÜ	nda	ngongolu	ngu	sokpa
Lorma	gila	felegɔ	saagɔ	goi	gaazuvɛ	daa	niin	wun	sokpai
Kpelle	tɔnɔ	feerɛ	saaba	woli	ŋei	la	nyiŋ	ŋÜŋ	sÜa
Mano	doo	peetɛ	yaaka	too	nyiɛ	le	sɔ̃	wÜkele	nyu
Dan	dɔ	pira	yaka	tu	nyaga	di	sÜ	goga	nyÜ
We	dɔ	pire	yaka	turu	nyawe	le-bo	so	wun	ne
Nwa	dɔ	pilɔ	a	ŋe	lon	laga	sɔ	me	nye
Mwa	do	ple	yaga	trona	yirebe	di	so	moru	nyi
Bẽ	do	plao	ŋgaõ	turun	yowore	ye	so	mwunu	nye
Guro	du	fia	yaa	tone	yÜe	le	sÜe	mbɔ	mi
Bisa	dinne	hira	karko	tur	yer	le	sɔ	min	mil
Bobo Fing	tele	pla	saxa	turu	nyono	do	nyini	ŋwon	bi
Dei	boo	sõõ	tãã	lɔɔ	gire	ŋuɛɛn	ŋirɛ	duru	merã
Bassa	do	sõõ	tãã	lɔ̃	gire	uŋo	ŋirɛ	tru	mõlã
Guere	doo	sõõ	tã	nɔgu	gie	ŋuɔ	nye	debo	mera
Grebo	do	so̱	tã	nuuã	yile	uunɔ	nye	lu	mia
Kuwaa	dee	sɔ̃ɔ̃	tãã	nɔi	sĩ	wɔ̃	kala	wulu	nyu
Akan-Twi	baako	abieŋ	abiɛsa	aso	ani	ano	ɛso	eti	ehwene
Ga	ekome	enyɔ	etɛ̃	toi	hiŋmɛi	daa	nɔ	yitso	gugɔ
Yoruba	eni	eji	ɛta	eti	oju	ɛno	envi	oli	imu

Invariably, the question of language versus dialect arises in the discussion of African languages, as in the phrase "he spoke an African dialect." The implication of this phrase is of course that there is but one African language. If we draw the recognized distinction between language and dialect, that of mutual intelligibility (if you can't understand the speech of someone, he is speaking a language different from your own, while if you can, it is a dialect of your own language) then the notion of dialect discussed earlier is quite wrong. By the above definition, Africa has somewhere between 1000 - 1500 distinct languages (estimates vary). Many of these languages also have several dialectal variants. At least four distinct dialects have been identified for Kpelle and for Lorma.

Although we may have resolved the problem of dialect, the reader may still be wondering just how closely these languages are related and in what ways they are related. The answer to this question is unfortunately quite complicated so that in the following paragraphs only a partial answer can be given.

To begin with, languages can be compared on the basis of their sound systems, their syntax, their vocabulary and their meaning (see Chapter II for definitions). The most common way to compare languages is to compare how two or more languages will represent a given word. As a general rule, the more basic words two languages have in common, the more closely the two languages are related. Figure 4 shows a comparison of some common words in European languages and in some of the languages in West Africa.

One of the assumptions behind the comparison of figure 4 and the chart in figure 3 is that of divergent development. At one time there was a single group of people who later separated into two or more groups. Once isolated, the language of the two groups developed in different ways until finally after a long period of time, they were no longer mutually intelligible. Presumably, this process has continued repeatedly and is the primary explanation for the degree of linguistic diversity in Africa today.

Yet in addition to divergence, there is also convergent development, that of two different languages becoming more similar as a result of contact and commercial intercourse. It is possible to find two distinct language groups living together, sharing not only similar words, but turns of expression and cultural items. Thus with both the processes of convergence and divergence the precise relation of any one language to another may prove to be extremely complex, much more so at least than figure 3 would have you believe.

CHAPTER II

HOW TO STUDY A MANDE LANGUAGE ON YOUR OWN

1. Introduction

People have been learning foreign languages for centuries both with formal instruction and without. This fact is at least encouraging, though at this point, history has revealed no outstanding method or approach to language learning. Here in Zorzor, I know some high school students who are studying French in school...they are getting nowhere, at the same time, there are high school students who came from other parts of Liberia who learn Lorma within a year outside their daily academic studies.

This anecdote suggests two things, 1) a formal approach does not guarantee learning and 2) an informal approach does not necessarily inhibit it. Furthermore, most efforts to determine what is the most effective method to learn language have usually concluded that the most crucial differences in classroom effectiveness center around the quality of teacher, the organization of classroom procedures and learner interest and discipline. The method involved has rarely been deemed significant.

What this evidence means is that crucial to learning a language is a well-organized learning procedure (no matter what method is involved) and hard work; the more you work, the more you learn (within reason).

What this also means is that any method can be used to learn. Nevertheless it is important that the learner be aware of the variety of these approaches and their implications.

2. Aspects of Language Learning to Consider

If you have ever studied a foreign language before, you probably encountered most of the following situations:

(a) You know what you want to say, but you don't know how to say it either because you don't know the word or how to use it;

(b) Two or three words sound alike, but have very different meanings;

(c) You figured out how to ask the question, but couldn't begin to comprehend the answer;

(d) You said something that you thought was appropriate and everybody laughed.

All of these problems are real, and represent different aspects of language learning that you need to know about.

The first problem points out that there are two modes of meaning in language: that found in words, and that found in the relationship between words. These two modes of meaning are more formally called vocabulary and syntax.

The second problem is another system, the means by which these modes of meaning are signaled. This sytem, more formally termed the sound or phonological system, concerns the contrastive sounds used by the language.

The third problem concerns an overemphasis on the production of sentences and an underemphasis on the comprehension of sentences.

The fourth problem concerns the social context in which the language is embedded, that is, what you said was technically correct in terms of (a) and (b) above, but appeared out of context. Your comment could have been humorous for any of the following reasons:

(a) Thus it was correct, but not expected. That is, since so few foreigners say the right thing at the right time in the right way that the very correctness of the response is out of context.

(b) Your comment may have been correct, but inappropriate, that is, in the specific context, another comment is required. You would no more think of greeting people at a funeral with "hi there" than you would of showing up in a bathing suit.

(c) Your comment may have been humorous for other reasons as well. It may have been correct, but carried an additional meaning. In French if you say you are full rather than satisfied you mean that you are pregnant...a strange thing to say after a fine meal, particularly for a male. When you are in the process of learning the vocabulary and syntax of a language, you can expect some surprisingly humorous developments.

(d) Your comment may have meant something other than intended. In The Lonely African by Colin Turnbull, one missionary is credited with saying "your bottom" rather than "good morning" because the user failed to make a tone distinction. This kind of error is normal when learning the sound system of the language.

For Lorma speakers learning English, the pronunciation of final consonants (the consonants at the end of words) are a problem. One of the general strategies which speakers use is that "when in doubt add an l." Thus I have heard will for way. But for good humor dead bottle for dead body (John Singler, personal communication) is supreme. Let's face it, these things are funny and the best way to deal with them is to laugh. together. You may as well, for you are certain to be next if you are serious about learning a Liberian language.

These differences may be due to pronunciation, as in the above examples or to the wrong choice of words (malaprops).

These problems then, underscore the aspects of language that you need to know about in order to effectively study language. These can be summarized as 1) the organization of language: vocabulary, syntax, phonology; 2) speaking vrs. listening; and 3) social context (usage).

3. The Organization of Language

Language consists of three subsystems: 1) phonology (the sound system of the language); 2) the lexicon (the vocabulary of the language); and 3) the syntax (the system of putting words together to make sentences). In everyday language, language consists of 1) a set of distinctive sounds, 2) a vocabulary, and 3) a grammar: a set of rules stating how sentences are formed.

3.1 Phonology (the sounds of a language)

Every language has a finite set of distinctive sounds which are used to convey meaning. These sounds are called phonemes. While the inventory of these sounds is not the same from language to language, they are similar enough in most cases not to cause problems. Yet there are inevitably cases, however, where one language makes a distinction which the other doesn't. For some reason, if these distinctions are not part of your native language they will be hard to hear and hard to produce, yet with practice they can both be heard and pronounced giving you the same access to the phonemic distinction that native speakers have. Chapter VI contains sound drills designed to help you learn to hear the differences between those sound contrasts found in Liberian languages, but not in English.

3.2 Lexicon and Syntax (vocabulary and word order)

With the distinction between lexicon and syntax as that of words and their combination into sentences, it is worth while to consider what this means. Meaning in language is of two types, that which is general and systematic, and that which is individual and idiosyncratic. For example, we can say that elephants are big and mice are small or we can say that some elephants and some mice are big for their species, or small for that matter. This way of relating size to different items is general and systematic and can be constructed by relating one word to another, that is it can be expressed syntactically.

But it is also possible to express size in another way as the following sets illustrate:

drop, puddle, pond, lake, sea, ocean
baby, child, youth, adult, aged
pebble, rock, boulder

This usage is idiosyncratic, that is: drop, puddle, etc., are not systematically related to each other in form, but are simply different words. Thus the expression of systematic and general meanings is the domain of syntax while the expression of idiosyncratic meanings is the domain of the lexicon.

3.3 Syntax:

It is important to bear in mind that the division between lexical and syntactic meanings is not exactly the same from language to language though it is nearly so. Nevertheless, we may find one language expressing a notion syntactically whereas the other uses a single word. Below are some examples:

English	Typical Mande
calf:	cow child
to dance:	to do dance
sea:	big water
house:	place where one lives
potash:	bitter salt

Thus in your exposure to a new language, you will find that what you expect to be one word is actually several. One of the nice things about Mande languages is that if you learn that the way to say "worker" is literally "farm-work-do-person" and you know the words for "farm, "work", "do" and "person", you do not have to really learn any new words, only a new combination which turns out to be easier for most people. You can also expect to find words which require several words for translation into English.

4. What Does Language Ability Entail?

Everyone has heard of someone who speaks six or seven languages. The questions that this raises are what does this entail and how did they do it.

4.1 Competence and Performance:

In order to speak a language, you have to have considerable knowledge about the language. You have to know the sound system, though perfect knowledge of it isn't absolutely necessary. You have to know some words and some syntactic rules. The question arises, how many words and how many rules?

The number of words one needs to know varies from language to language because of differences in the way concepts are expressed, whether by syntactic devices, or by word compounding or by having one word covering a wide range of concepts. But by rephrasing the question as "how many concepts are necessary?", the question can at least receive an answer, though to my knowledge little systematic study of this question has been carried out. Rather cautiously, then, I throw out the figure of 1,000 to 2,000 concepts as being necessary to comprehend 90-95% of a conversation. This percentage marks the level at which one can keep up with the general meaning of the discussion.

A language is not just a collection of words but, as we have pointed out, it also contains a syntactic system. This syntactic system consists of a set of rules about how to combine words to make sentences. The answer is that you need to know most of them, something any good language text should present. While the general set of syntactic expressions are fixed, the way they are expressed may be straightforward or complex. Plurals in English are easy, but complex in German. Pronouns in English are straightforward but complex in the Mande languages.

4.2 The Question of User Utility:

It is one thing to talk about the kind of information you need to speak a language and another to talk about how it is actually used. For example we can tell someone about how to do multiplication, which principles are involved. That is, we can say that 6 x 7 is 7 added 6 times. Yet when we ask someone "what is 6 x 7?", the answer will be given in less time than it could possibly take to add seven six times. In doing arithmetic, we found it to our advantage to memorize the individual products rather than calculate them each time we need them. The calculator, on the other hand does just the opposite.

This example is intended to emphasize that simply stating the kind of knowledge that is involved in language does not necessarily mean that this is the form in which this information is used. In language teaching, two positions have been taken. One which might be called a "deductive" approach, and the other an "inductive" approach.

The deductive approach presents the learner with a set of rules to learn. Once these rules are learned, the learner is free to construct sentences. The inductive approach argues the reverse, that if you present the learner with a set of sentences that the learner will figure out the general patterns.

This second approach usually also presumes that there is relatively less to generalize about than the first. That is, what people do in learning a language is to learn a sentence type and develop variants of it by substituting words at various places.

These two views are quite different and presume two different notions of the human mind. The deductive approach presumes that the mind is like a calculator with little memory capacity and prefers therefore to generate new information rather than store it. The inductive approach considers the mind to have a much greater capacity for memory.

In this regard, it is true that the mind has a vast capacity for memory. Think of all the experiences, events, jokes and facts you can recall. Think of the words that are available to you, these number somewhere between 10,000 and 20,000 items. What is truely remarkable about this is you can inventory them all within a split second. If I ask you which of the following are English words: "house", "tire", "fleurten", "vice"; you will have no difficulty whatsoever picking out fleurten as the non-English word. In this regard. the human mind is far superior to the computer.

It is this tremendous memory capacity that leads me to emphasize the importance of an approach which stresses the importance of the inductive approach: working with real sentences.

4.3 Integrating the Two Approaches:

This conclusion does not exclude a deductive approach however. The formal presentation of rules and generalizations can help a learner understand why a given sentence is expressed the way that it is and why each element is present. This kind of knowledge cannot be obtained directly from a native speaker of any language unless that person has been trained in linguistics. Such knowledge can be most easily obtained from the grammatical section of a language textbook which has been prepared by someone with formal linguistic training.

These rules are particularly useful in the beginning stages of language learning because they provide the learner with a set of statements with which to evaluate and interpret both incoming and outgoing sentences. However, when the learner becomes more competent in the language, to the point of actively producing and comprehending sentences in an ongoing conversation more or less spontaneously, the learner will no longer have need of these devices. That is, the kind of knowledge that they represent will have been converted into a more useable form.

5. Listening:

Much of traditional language teaching has placed great emphasis on production: the generation of sentences. This approach has implicitly assumed that if you can speak sentences, then you can also comprehend them. We are beginning to take note that these two skills (production and listening) are quite different activities and should be treated separately.

Earlier, we mentioned a problem of learning how to generate questions, but being unable to comprehend the answers. This is a typical problem of traditional approaches. At this time, language teachers are beginning to place more emphasis on being able to comprehend what is said during the earlier stages of language learning. This is not to say that no language production is emphasized, but rather that that comprehension should precede production at all times. This means that early emphasis is placed in understanding what is going on about you rather than being able to talk about it, and emphasis is placed on why a given sentence has the form that it does, rather than how to produce it.

After the learner has developed a listening fluency in certain areas, and knows what is being said and why, then is the time to encourage production of sentences for that topic.

6. Context

The process of communication involves two aspects; the message and the context in which the message is situated. A traffic light presents to us very little information (red, green and yellow) yet the context (a street intersection) permits us to provide a rich interpretation of the message: to stop, to go or to proceed with caution.

Learning a language can also be seen in this light, the message and the context. That is, in understanding a sentence, one can take advantage of the context in which the message is embedded for the interpretation of the communication as well as the message. The use of context is particularly useful for a beginning learner of a language, with only an incipient ability to interpret a message. For example, the context in which a greeting takes place is easily identifiable. The messages which can be asked are finite. The learner does not need to know the entire language, or even hear the entire sentence to know what is being said. A key word identified from a sentence may be sufficient for full comprehension of the message.

In teaching children to read, educators have found that context is very important. Beginning readers have a large amount of context (pictures) compared to the message (one sentence per page). When a child first approaches a new page, he/she will first examine the picture to delimit the range of possible messages that the sentence could represent. At one stage my son only used the first letter in each word, along with the context to construct the message. Not knowing how to recognize the words beyond the first letter, he would guess at its meaning, given the context, and pick a word that started with the same sound as the one he was reading and which made sense in the given context. Quite often he was correct and in so doing gradually built up his reading competence, but often he was not, though he might even complete a sentence having missed two or three words in the process. But the interesting thing was that if the sentence made sense given the context he would continue reading, while if it did not, he would rescan the sentence for a better reading.

The point here is not how to teach children to read, but the value of context in learning a language. This means that if you can control the context, you have a better chance of comprehending the messages.

6.1 Ways of Controlling Context

Of course, the classroom is an ideal way of controlling context. Here you can define the range of what is being expressed within very narrow limits and thereby optimize context. Some of these techniques are given as follows:

(a) Sen-sit Build Up:

In this drill, the learner is given a list of messages which will be presented to him/her whether a list of nouns, commands, activities, numbers of anything. Ideally this list should be in the form of pictures, real objects or demonstrations. The important thing however, is that the learner knows the order of presentation.

The tutor then says the first message. (The learner should know in advance the meaning of what is being said.) If it is a command then the learner should carry it out. If it is a picture, the learner should point to the cell. If it is a thing, then the learner should point it out.

The learner should know at this point, that the tutor will either repeat the message or utter something new. If it is a new message, it has to be the second item. Once the second item has been introduced, the tutor then drills the learner on the first two messages.

At this point, the learner can expect one of two messages which are known, or if not that, a new message will be the third item on the list. When the third item is introduced, the tutor will drill the learner randomly on the first three items until the learner can identify them easily.

Then the fourth item is introduced and drilled in the same way until the list is complete.

Usually only seven items should be introduced in this way during one drill, and if more messages are to be introduced, then the messages should be divided into two drills.

(b) Practical Sentences:

This approach can also be used to drill practical sentences that the learner would like to use. Here the learner draws up a list of seven practical sentences that he/she would like to know and the tutor introduces them to the learner in the target language in that order.

(c) Comprehending a Text:

Dialog and monolog drills can be initially presented as totally unknown messages (no context). Learners then attempt to pick out what is already familiar to them from previous lessons or experience. This can profitably be repeated only two or three times.

Next the learner is allowed to look at the text to see how it is written, this helps the learner separate the flow of sounds into word sequences and will usually result in the identification of more words and more of the meaning of the sentence.

Next the learner is permitted to study the translation and go over the analysis of the text so that every aspect of the text is understood: the meaning of each word, and the reason for the presence of each element in the sentence. At this point, the learner should know what is going to be said, that is, the context has now been provided, but the usefulness of the text has not yet been exhausted.

The learner can listen to the text again, following along the written text, but this time he/she should be aware of what is being said and should know the meaning of each sentence. In order to do this, it may be necessary to hear the text several times, or to refer back to the analysis to be sure.

Finally, the learner can listen to the text without the use of written material, and should continue to do so until comprehension is 100%.

These texts should be returned periodically to be sure that comprehension is retained, and to reinforce the retention of this knowledge.

NOTE: To repeat a text verbatum is a virtual impossibility for most tutors, either due to bordom or to lack of experience in reading the language you are studying. For this reason it is preferable to record the text initially and rely on your recorder for repetitions rather than your tutor.

By the time the learner has gotten this far, he/she will know a lot of the language even though he/she still cannot produce it. Nevertheless, the production stage will be a lot easier because of this breakdown.

(d) Translation Drills:

One of the problems in production as well as recognition is figuring out or knowing how things would be said in a language. One method is trial and error, (learner says something and is, if lucky, corrected). An alternative to this is the translation drill. The learner either writes a composition in English for the learner to translate, or asks the learner to translate sentence by sentence. Here the learner knows what is going to be said and should have some idea of the words to be used and the kind of construction involved. Thus when the sentence appears, most of the context has already been provided.

Such drills should be taped, so that they can be reused.

(e) Known Event:

Here the learner asks the tutor to talk about a commonly shared event, such as going to the market, visiting a friend's house, or even a folktale told in English. Again the learner will have narrowed the range of contexts and should be able to interpret the message more richly than otherwise.

(f) Picture Drills:

Another way of controlling the context is to use a picture of some scene or activity that the learner is (1) interested in learning about or (2) has some familiarity with already. The learner then asks the tutor to talk about the picture or asks the tutor questions about the picture.

(g) Eavesdropping:

If you find yourself in a situation where the language is being spoken, e.g. a bar, in a taxi, or cookshop, listen to the language with the aim of trying to pick words you know and getting a general idea of what the conversation is about.

(h) Outside the classroom there are also techniques which can be used to narrow the context. One is to place one's self in a place where a known activity will take place. Greetings, marketing, bartering and so forth. When I was in Mexico City a few years ago, I had at my grasp very little Spanish, but I did know the seeming useless sentence "where is the post office?" Well, I found the post office, walked about a block away and asked my question. I knew what the answer had to be so I was able to figure out what the Spanish had to mean. Then I moved two blocks away and repeated the drill. Variations to this kind of exercise are limited only by lack of imagination.

We cannot underestimate the important role that memory has in language learning. We have already suggested that to have a minimum operating capacity a user must have a minimum of 1,000 to 2,000 concepts available for use both in recognition and production, as well as the understanding of how these words are organized into sentences (syntax).

In describing how to develop recognition skills, we suggested that the learner should spend considerable time listening in context: sentences should appear in a context in which their meaning would be clear, words should appear in the context of a sentence. This approach also suggests developing a familiarity with a fixed number of sentences.

Just think what this means: that while the specific goal of the exercise was the recognition of the given words, it is clear that in addition familiarity with these words has developed so that they might be recognized in other contexts. Furthermore, the specific sentences learned serve as the basis for recognizing a set of sister sentences in which only one word has been changed so that, even if the learner does not know the new word, the sentence may be understood due to context. Finally, the learner has learned to listen, a technique which will provide the primary source of new information about the language.

7. Learning Production

But production deserves its due. One cannot go around listening all the time, though I suspect one would be better off with an ability to comprehend what was going on about than with an ability to talk about it. Anyway, learning to produce sentences is also an important language ability.

To this end, particularilly during the beginning we recommend that sentences as a whole be memorized. Now everyone claims that they have a weak memory and that memorizing scores of sentences is a real impossibility. Yet such is not the case, though one's language learning memory may not be operating at full capacity. That is, whether if is true or not, one should take the view that one's brain is like a muscle (an increasingly popular view) and that the more you exercise it, the stronger it gets. In partial support of this view is a report by August Schliemann, the archaeologist who discovered Troy, who incidentally claimed that he had a weak memory. Source: Ilios by Henry Schliemann. 1880; London, John Murry).

First of all I took pains to learn to write legibly, and this I succeded in doing after twenty lessons from the famous caligraphist Magnée, of Brussels. Afterwards, in order to improve my position, I applied myself to the study of modern languages. My annual salary amounted only to 800 francs (£32), half of which I spent upon my studies; on the other half I lived---miserably enough, to be sure. My lodging, which cost 8 francs a month, was a wretched garret without a fire, where I shivered with cold in winter and was scorched with the heat in summer. My breakfast consisted of rye-meal porridge, and my dinner never cost more than twopence. But nothing spurs one on to study more than misery and the certain prospect of being able to release oneself from it by unremitting work. Besides, the desire of showing myself worthy of Minna created and developed in me a boundless courage. I applied myself with extraordinary diligence to the study of English. Necessity taught me a method which greatly facilitates the study of a language. This method consists in reading a great deal aloud, without making a translation, taking a lesson every day, constantly writing essays upon subjects of interest, correcting these under the supervision of a teacher, learning them by heart, and repeating in the next lesson what was corrected on the previous day. My memory was bad, since from my childhood it had not been exercised upon any object; but I made use of every moment, and even stole time for study. In order to acquire a good pronunciation quickly, I went twice every Sunday to the English church, and repeated to myself in a low voice every word of the clergyman's sermon. I never went on my errands, even in the rain, without having my book in my hand and learning something by heart; and I never waited at the post office without reading. By such methods I gradually strengthened my memory, and in three months' time found no difficulty in reciting from memory to my teacher, Mr. Taylor, in each day's lesson, word by word, twenty printed pages, after having read them over three times attentively. In this way I committed to memory the whole of Goldsmith's Vicar of Wakefield and Sir Walter Scott's Ivanhoe. From over-excitement I slept but little, and employed my sleepless hours at night in going over in my mind what I had read on the preceding evening. The memory being always much more concentrated at night than in the day-time, I found these repetitions at night of paramount use. Thus I succeeded in acquiring in half a year a thorough knowledge of the English language.

I then applied the same method to the study of French, the difficulties of which I overcame likewise in another six months. Of French authors, I learned by heart the whole of Fenelon's Adventures de Telemaque and Bernardin de Saint Pierre's Paul et Virginie. This unremitting study had in the course of a single year strengthened my memory to such a degree, that the study of Dutch, Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese appeared very easy, and it did not take me more than six weeks to write and speak each of these languages fluently.

With the effect of the moist air of Holland, my complaint in the chest gradually disappeared during my first year's residence in Amsterdam, and it has never returned. But my passion for study caused me to neglect my mechanical occupation in the office of Mr. F. C. Quien, especially as I began to consider it beneath me. My principals would give me no promotion; they probably thought that a person who shows his incapacity for the business of a servant in an office proves thereby his unfitness for any higher duties. At last, however, through the intercession of my worthy friends, Louis Stoll of Mannheim and J. H. Ballauf of Bremen, I had on the 1st of March, 1844, the good fortune to obtain a situation as correspondent and bookkeeper in the office of Messrs. B. H. Schröder & Co. of Amsterdam, who engaged me at a salary of 1200 francs (£48); but when they saw my zeal, they added 800 francs a year more by way of encouragement. This generosity, for which I shall ever be grateful to them, was in fact the foundation of my prosperity; for, as I thought that I could make myself still more usefull by a knowledge of Russian, I set to work to learn that language also. But the only Russian books I could procure were an old grammar, a lexicon, and a bad translation of Les Adventures de Télémaque. In spite of all my enquiries, I could not find a teacher of Russian, since, with the exception of the Russian Vice-Consul, Mr. Tannenberg, who would not consent to give me lessons, there was not one in Amsterdam who understood a word of the language. So I betook myself to the study of it without a master, and, with the help of the grammar, I learned the Russian letters and their pronunciation in a few days. Then, following my old method, I began to write short stories of my own composition, and to learn them by heart. As I had no one to correct my work, it was, no doubt, extremely bad; but I tried at the same time to correct my mistakes by the practical exercise of learning the Russian Adventures de Télémaque by heart. It occurred to me that I should make more progress if I had some one to whom I could relate the adventures of Telemachus; so I hired a poor Jew for four francs a week, who had to come every evening for two hours to listen to my Russian recitations, of which he did not understand a syllable.

As the ceilings of the rooms of the common houses in Holland consist of single boards, people on the ground-floor can hear what is said in the third storey. My recitations therefore, delivered in a loud voice, annoyed the other tenants, who complained to the landlord, and twice while studying the Russian language I was forced to change my lodgings. But these inconveniences did not diminish my zeal, and in the course of six weeks I wrote my first Russian letter to Mr. Vasili Plotnikoff, the London agent for the great indigo dealers, Messrs. M.P.N. Malutin Brothers, at Moscow, and I found myself able to converse fluently with him and the Russian merchants Matweieff and Froloff, when they came to Amsterdam for the indigo auctions. After I had completed my study of the Russian language, I began to occupy myself seriously with the literatures of the languages I had learned.

8. F.S.I. Levels

There can be no doubt about it, Schliemann's system worked. Most people however would say, is this the most direct way to language mastery? Can't this approach be made more efficient? The answer is of course yes. And to explain this, we need to examine the system by which the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) determines the language competence of an individual.

The FSI examination is based on six levels ranging from S-0 (no competence) to S-5 (equivalent to that of a native speaker). The crucial level however is S-3 which is really the first stage at which the speaker has good control of the language and can continue developing language competence without special study. I call this level minimal language working capacity.

To attain an S-3 in a foreign lanuage is a real accomplishment and one which a learner who has attained this level can really feel proud of, though this should not by any means undervalue the attainment of the intermediate S-1 and S-2 levels. Furthermore, the development of these intermediate levels should be seen as targets in themselves and as steps along the way. These levels are summarized by the following self-test check list.

A CHECK LIST FOR SELF-APPRAISAL OF SPEAKING PROFICIENCY

(All answers must be YES to achieve at least the level of proficiency listed on the left, except for four items at the S-3 level.)

		YES	NO
S-0+	Can you use a minimum of thirty words in appropriate contexts? (i.e., not just count or recite the days of the week).	☐	☐
S-1	Can you tell someone how to get from here to the nearest hotel, restaurant, or post office?	☐	☐
	Can you ask and tell the time of day, day of the week, date?	☐	☐
	Can you order a simple meal?	☐	☐
	Can you negotiate for a hotel room or a taxi ride at a just price?	☐	☐
	Can you buy a needed item of clothing or a bus or train ticket?	☐	☐
	Can you understand and respond correctly to form questions about your nationality, marital status, occupation, date and place of birth, etc.?	☐	☐
	Can you make a social introduction and use appropriate leave-taking expressions?	☐	☐
	Can you use the language well enough to assist someone who does not know the language in coping with the situations or problems covered by the S-1 range?	☐	☐
S-1+	Can you meet all S-1 requirements and at least three of the S-2 requirements listed below?	☐	☐
S-2	Can you describe your present or most recent job or activity in some detail?	☐	☐
	Can you give detailed information about your family, your house, the weather today?	☐	☐
	Can you give or take simple messages over the telephone? (Forget the telephone, can you give or take simple messages?)	☐	☐

	Can you hire an employee or arrange for special services, taking care of details such as salary, qualification, hours, special duties?(can you order a table from a carpenter?)	☐	☐
	Can you give a brief autobiography including a statement of your immediate plans and hopes?	☐	☐
	Can you describe the geography of the United States (or some other country) or familiar location?	☐	☐
	Can you describe the basic structure of the United States government?	☐	☐
	Can you describe the function and purpose of the organization you represent?	☐	☐
	Do you feel confident that you understand what native speakers want to tell you about the above topics at least 80% of the time?	☐	☐

S-3	Are you afraid that you will misunderstand information given to you over the telephone?	☐	☐
	(Answers should be YES) Can you speak to a group of educated native speakers on a professional subject and be sure you are communicating what you want to, without obviously amusing or irritating them linguistically?	☐	☐
	Can you listen, take notes, and summarize accurately a speech or an informal discussion on your area of special interests, heard on the radio or over a public address system?	☐	☐
	Can you (on a social occasion) defend U.S. attitudes toward culture, race relations, or foreign aid from attack by an anti-American student or politician?	☐	☐
	Can you cope with such trying linguistic situations as broken-down plumbing, an undeserved traffic ticket, a serious social or diplomatic blunder made by you or a colleague?	☐	☐
	Can you follow connected discourse on a non-technical subject, e.g., a panel discussion on the status of women?	☐	☐
	Can you serve as an informal interpreter on subjects in the S-3 range?	☐	☐
	Do you feel that you have a professional command (rather than just a practical one) of the language?	☐	☐

S-3+	Can you meet all S-3 requirements and at least three of these S-4 requirements?	☐	☐
S-4	In professional discussions, is your vocabulary always extensive and precise enough to enable you to convey your exact meaning?	☐	☐
	Are you able to alter your speech deliberately, depending upon whether you are talking to university professors, close friends, employees, etc.?	☐	☐
	Can you serve as an informal interpreter for a U.S. senator or cabinet official on all diplomatic and social functions?	☐	☐
	Do you practically never make a grammatical mistake?	☐	☐
	Do you think you can carry out any job assignment as effectively in the language as in English?	☐	☐
S-4+	In discussions on all subjects, is your vocabulary always extensive and precise enough to enable you to convey your exact meaning?	☐	☐
S-5	Do native speakers react to you as they do to each other?	☐	☐
	Do you sometimes feel more at home in the language than in English?	☐	☐
	Can you do mental arithmetic in the language without slowing down?	☐	☐
	Is your vocabulary at least as extensive and precise as in English?	☐	☐
	Do you consider yourself a native speaker of the language?	☐	☐

The difference between S-2 and S-3 is really that between knowing a language so that you can use it in any context, and knowing enough of the language so that you can use it in a fixed context. This means that the skills listed under S-1 and S-2 can be specifically targeted for. That is, it is possible to define a specific set of contexts: biography, greetings, simple messages, etc. in which it is possible to build a working language competence. This can be accomplished by developing a listening ability for the range number of sentences which are likely to appear in that context and a speaking capacity for the specific skills.

By specifically targeting for these goals, it should be possible to achieve an S-1 after 50-60 hours of study (assuming that this time if being used effectively) and it should also be possible to achieve an S-2 after another 100 hours. One of the important things to remember about this phase of language study is that performance rather than competence is being measured, thus it is not how much you know, but how well you use it that counts. This is why context is so very important, for comprehension is as much anticipating what is to be said (context) as it is understanding the content of what is being said. Thus, "hanging in there" and making the effort to communicate (even if by gesture) is at least half the battle.

But while these targets are goals in themselves which the learner can aim for and accomplish, they can also be seen as steps on the way toward real language competence (S-3). The internalizing of a few hundred sentences can serve as the basic corpus of messages which can be expanded and applied to other situations.

In the communications handbook that accompanies this text, this has been the design: the first lessons are aimed at S-1 skills, while the later lessons aim at S-2 skills, so that by the time the book is completed, the learner should achieve an S-2 level and be well on the way to achieving an S-3 ability. Though in all honesty that level will require continued study.

Earlier we suggested ways of developing listening comprehension, what follows is a way of completing the use of the text, the learning of how to produce it.

9. Memorizing a Text (Layering)

Memorization of a text can be viewed as a sequential process beginning with the first word and going on to the next and so forth. Yet there is another way to view the process, and that is to see the text as a series of layers. For example, in learning to comprehend a text (discussed earlier) several steps were outlined, each one gleaning more information from the text, building up in the learner's mind layer upon layer of information about the text. When a learner has learned to comprehend a text, the job of memorizing the text is already half completed. The following steps are listed below:

A. Go over the text sentence by sentence (phrase by phrase and even word by word if necessary) with your tutor to develop as accurate a pronunciation as possible.

One procedure for doing this is for the learner to attempt to say the sentence. If the sentence is correct the tutor will say that it is correct (or signal so by not saying anything); if the sentence is incorrect, the tutor will repeat the sentence. This should continue until the learner at that point has done his/her best.

The major problem at this stage is the generosity of the tutor. The tutor really has to be encouraged to be critical. Thus the learner must repeatedly ask the tutor if that is the real way it is said, or whether it can be said better and should show enthusiasm in the tutor's pointing out these fine points. Otherwise the tutor will be inclined to let pronunciation slide.

B. Once the text has been gone over carefully, the text should be repeated sentence by sentence until a normal rate of speed is achieved. This can be practiced using a variety of techniques. Repeating the sentences after the tutor (or a tape recorder), along with the tutor or by tracking.

Tracking is a technique of repeating a sentence after about a second's delay. This has the effect of separating the listening part of the task from the production part of the task.

C. To be sure you are aware of all the distinctions, the learner should practice writing the sentence down after hearing it. This dictation drill should be done sentence by sentence, and in beginning stages, the sentence should be repeated as many as three times.

D. Writing down the text from memory is also a good exercise. This is a form of self-test which will give the learner a good idea of what is known and what isn't.

E. This stage should be followed by the learner attempting to say the text from memory with the tutor prompting at first.

F. The task is complete when the learner can rattle off the entire text at a normal rate of speed.

G. This exercise can be followed up by a question-answer drill in which the tutor asks questions in such a way that the memorized sentences will be the answers to the questions.

NOTE: Initial texts do not have to be long, as few as five sentences. But the learner should try to increase the length of these texts as soon as possible.

10. Self-Instructed and Learner-Centered Approaches

There are a number of reasons for emphasizing this kind of approach to language acquisition.

1. African languages are usually under such low demand for foreign language instruction that, teachers are unavailable, untrained or at best minimally trained. This means that when a tutor is hired, that person will never make the teaching of the targeted language his profession (unlike French, Chinese or Russian) and will probably be given a crash course in how to teach the language. Inevitably, this person will feel awkward because of the expectations

placed on him/her and the inadequate training given. This situation will create an avoidable tension in the classroom.

2. It is the learner who is the person who will either profit or suffer from the experience. It is the learner who has the most at stake. A successful language learning program will lead to a deeper and a more effective experience for the volunteer or other language learner. This being the case, it would be better to concentrate efforts on helping the learner to learn rather than on helping the teacher to teach.

3. Many language training programs allow insufficient time, regardless of how that time is used to allow for the achievement of a minimal speaking competence. This means that serious learners will have to continue their learning outside the classroom anyway.

4. Learners trained in a teacher-centered program in which they have little control in how the class will be run, are ill equipt to make the transition to learning on their own.

For these reasons, many educators are moving to learner-centered approaches. These approaches place more attention on the learner, giving the learner the sophistication in the types of learning techniques that are available, the ways drills should be run and so forth. While these approaches have their own drawbacks and may be slower during the initial stages, they do have a number of advantages.

1. Tutors are released from their anxiety. Their responsibilities are consonant with their training and experience. They are responsible for (1) providing a model of the target language (2) correcting learner responses and (3) running drills which the learner will help to establish. The tutor is not responsible for preparing lessons, for the success of the student, or for grading the student's progress. Thus the tutor is only responsible for what any native speaker of a language is capable of doing. This situation eliminates the tension of the classroom that arises when these responsibilities are placed on the tutor. As a result the relationship between tutor and learner is more of cooperation rather than apprehension.

2. The learner being placed fully in charge of learning no longer must bear the burden of suffering under a tutor whose methods the learner objects to. If the methods being used are unsuitable, they can be changed.

3. Given insufficient time in a training program, learners will be forced to switch to a learner-centered program anyway if they are going to continue their language learning, so why not begin a learner-centered emphasis from the start?

4. A learner who has experienced learner-center training from the start, will be well prepared to make the transition program to learning on their own.

However, learner-centered language training requires a considerable amount of training of the learner in the techniques and approaches of language learning. This cannot only be done in the abstract, but requires supervision by an experienced language teacher and ideally a textbook which is oriented toward this approach to language learning such as the following textbook. In the communications handbook accompanying this volume, each lesson is both aimed at the learner (though it can be used by a classroom teacher or a partially trained tutor) and contains detailed instructions as to how drills should be run and dialogs used. It presents the grammatical notes in terms which an untrained learner can understand and contrasts the target language with English so that the learner can see exactly where the major points of contrasts. Finally the handbook contains a set of suggestions for self-study, procedures which the learner can carry out on his/her own to continue language study.

11.1 Tutor Selection

When making the transition from a formal language training program to a totally learner-centered program, the first major task will be to locate a tutor who will be willing to help you.

In this regard, it is important for the learner to remember that a number of factors are involved in the tutor learner relationship. Some of these are listed as follows:

1. Personality. There is always the possibility of a personality clash. That for some reason the tutor and the learner do not hit it off, or for that matter they may. Factors here may be age, sex, education and cultural background as well as pure personality differences.

2. Relationship. In most cases, a learner-tutor arrangement will necessarily develop into a deeper relationship involving mutual reciprocations based on available resources. The learner will be given things, have things done for him/her as well as being informed about the workings of the community. In return, the learner can be expected to return the favor in terms of textbooks or school fees if the tutor is a student, money or other gifts. This relationship can be controlled by both parties, and it is in general sound advice to deepen the relationship slowly.

3. Knowledge of language. It is commonly accepted that the real language is known by old people, and not by young schoolboys and girls, therefore, it is often said that if you want to learn the real language it is best to contact the old people. This approach too, has its problems, however, for it may well be that old people do not know English or any other medium of common communication, therefore the learner may actually at first engage a tutor who knows English.

4. Knowledge of how to write the language. For most Liberian languages, a writing system has been established, and which is in use by at least some members of the community. If this is so, it is preferable to find a tutor who can read and write in the target language, for it will help you in recording texts and writing down sentences. You can even ask your tutor to prepare texts, dialogs and sentences for you to study.

5. Reputation of the tutor. Not everyone in the town has the same esteem in the eyes of the community. To some extent the esteem of the tutor will rub off on the learner and vise versa.

These points suggest that in engaging a tutor that one should proceed cautiously. The learner should wait until he/she is established in town or until sufficient contacts are made before showing interest in a tutor. Then one should ask respected members of the community who might be recommended. (Hiring someone without a recommendation is a real gamble.) One might ask other volunteers, teachers, your landlord, village head, pastor or other such persons.

It is always good to not commit one's self too soon. That is by saying that the period is temporary, for a few weeks only or that one wants to try a number of people, one can avoid the problem of being stuck with someone who isn't working or of the embarrassment of having to fire someone.

Finally, when the learner has found a tutor with whom he/she feels confident, the arrangement can be made more permanant. It is only at this time that the learner should gradually allow the relationship to deepen.

11.2 Organizing a Learning Schedule

The most important point to be made here is consistancy. That is whatever program the learner decided to set up, it should be followed religiously. It is far better to maintain a modest commitment of only a few hours or even less than to set a schedule of learning that is too ambitious to keep. The learner should endeavor to establish learning times that are unlikely to be disturbed by special events, and in the event that they are, the language session should be rescheduled.

The second most important thing is to structure the sessions so that the learner and the tutor are aware of what is supposed to take place during the session and what is supposed to be done by the learner as preparation or follow-up. The following schedule is designed for a learning session involving three contact periods per week. This structure is probably too ambitious for the learner who is also holding down an 8 hour job, but if followed will allow the learner to progress rapidly. In the event that the learner has less time to commit to the learning of the language, the schedule can be pared down.

A well-written language textbook ought to have a large number of drills that can be used in the self-instructional mode. Most such textbooks are organized so that a chapter be completed each week by a class meeting five hours per week. The following outline suggests one way in which a textbook chapter can be organized into a weekly lesson plan.

11.3 Use of a Spoken Dialog

Class Period #1

(1) Listen to the dialog with book closed, for comprehension. Record the dialog with a cassette tape recorder for later use.
(2) Listen to the dialog, this time following the book (listening for word-divisions and other phonological cues).
(3) Analyze the dialog for content. Work with your tutor if necessary so that you understand the full meaning and structure of each sentence.

Homework #1

(1) Listen to the dialog on the cassette recorder for comprehension so that each sentence is correctly identified and each word is heard as a separate entity.
(2) Repeat the above as often as is necessary. If the structure of the dialog is unclear, return to the written text, following the spoken dialog word by word until it becomes clear.
(3) Write the dialog several times, copying directly from the text (not from memory).
(4) Enter new vocabulary items into your notebook.

Class Period #2

(1) Listen again to the dialog spoken by the tutor.
(2) Practice saying each sentence with the tutor (using a backward buildup if necessary) until each sentence of the dialog is said flawlessly at a normal rate.
(3) Practice dialog with tutor or with other learners in the class.

Homework #2	(1)	Memorize dialog for following class. For beginners this dialog will be quite short (3-4 lines) but by the end of the first year, these dialogs will enlarge to about 20 lines per week.
Class Period #3	(1)	Use the dialog in class. Remember to simulate the context of the dialog completely; stand, sit, look the other person in the eye at the appropriate times, use props.
	(2)	Develop variations on the dialog using word substitution or sentence "transformation" as appropriate to your level of knowledge.

11.4 Use of Written Texts

Written texts should consist of short (ten-sentence) descriptions, stories relevant to a specific context. As the course progresses, the texts will become longer.

Class Period #1	(1)	Presentation, recording and analysis of the text.
Homework #1	(1)	Listening comprehension of the text (sentences as units, words as discrete entities) and the writing out of the text (not from memory).
Class Period #2	(1)	Practice in hearing the text with phonemic accuracy, practice in saying the text at normal speed with phonemic accuracy.
Homework #2	(1)	Memorization of the text (now that it is understood both syntactically and phonetically). This will involve writing it out, saying it orally, and tracking the taped version to achieve normal speed and timing.
Class Period #3	(1)	Recitation of text orally and/or writing it down from memory.
Homework #3	(1)	Correction of noted errors.

11.5 Use of structural drills

All drills should be taped for home listening and practice.

1) Phonological drills:
Basic phonological transcription can be learned through dictation exercises. Errors in these dictation exercises will reveal problem areas in phonemic discrimination.

In consultation with the language coordinator and the textbook, discrimination drills, including minimal pair exercises can be prescribed, recorded and used, both in class and at home.

It is important to remember that learners must be able to hear phonemic differences before they can be expected to articulate them.

Once phonemic differences are mastered, accuracy can be further improved through transcription exercises. Articulation can be further improved through dialog and text repetition, tracing and memorization.

2) Syntactic Drills:
Each drill begins with listening comprehension. It is important that learners comprehend what is going on: the purpose of the drill, the meaning of the words and constructions involved, and what they are supposed to do with it.

Once the drill is understood, learners should go through the drill, repeating each sentence after the tutor if necessary until normal speed and accurate pronunciations are achieved.

The drill is run according to the specifications given in the textbook. Answers and responses must be given at normal speed. If that is impossible, either go back to the preceeding step or abandon the drill and consult with the language coordinator. The drill should be practiced until it is carried out perfectly, though this mastery need not be achieved during the first running of the drill in class.

3) Vocabulary:

A minimum of 40 lexical concepts should be acquired each week. These may come from the text or from the genralized vocabulary lists.

Several types of drills have been developed for the learning of vocabulary in the Communications Handbook companion volume. Space does not permit a detailed statement of these drills, but the following list is indicative of the types involved.

(a) vocabulary
(b) flash cards with pictures on one side
(c) related vocabulary lists
(d) the sens-it-cell

12. Conclusion

This chapter has summarized the thinking, strategy and methodology involved in the study of a foreign language and has gone into the planning and construction of these learning materials. It is presented here for the express purpose of providing the learner with a general understanding of the task and the way to proceed.

CHAPTER III

INSTRUCTIONS TO TUTORS

1. General Remarks

The chances are that if you have been asked to tutor someone in a Liberian language, you probably have never taught your language to a foreigner before. If this is the case, you may be very worried because you are not sure about what to do. If you are worried, continue to read this chapter, for it contains a set of suggestions about what is important in a language learning situation.

2. Preliminary Considerations

Even before you get started, there are some important considerations, the first is the organization of the learning situation. The learning sessions have to be considered important by both the tutor and the learner. To emphasize the importance of these sessions, it is important to "mark" these learning sessions as follows.

A. Time:

The sessions should have a specific beginning time and a closing time. These times should be kept the same from week to week. There should also be a penalty for lateness and no matter what the reason, missed sessions should be made up.

B. Place:

The sessions should be held in a specified place which is considered good for learning. Tables and straight chairs are considered better than sofas and beds. Classrooms are better than homes, but homes are better for most people than bars.

C. Agenda:

There should be an agenda or class plan of what is to be done during each period. This can be prepared either by the learner or by the tutor, depending on what has been arranged. An agenda should contain a list of topics to be covered, including: (1) pages in the textbook, (2) correction of homework, (3) practice of dialog, (4) taping of dialogs, (5) vocabulary study, (6) free conversation and so forth. These agendas (technically called "lesson plans") should be stored somewhere (a file, notebook, etc.) as a record of accomplishment during the course of study.

D. Preparation/Followup

A learner should expect to do out-of-class preparation and followup for each session. This may involve studying the dialog, grammar, cultural notes, taped aspects of the class session, vocabulary work, preparation for class discussions or taking excursions into the language community to practice what has been learned. Whatever the event, the tutor and learner should agree to the preparation and followup activities, preferably in writing (see agenda) before the end of the preceding class.

3. The Role of the Tutor

In most cases, the tutor is not required to be an experienced language teacher or someone who knows a great deal about the grammar of the language being studied. Rather, what is expected of the tutor is simply what follows:

A. An ability to speak your language clearly

B. An ability to be patient

C. An ability to point out and correct mistakes.

4. Classroom Rules of Order

There are a number of rules of running a class, which if followed will help to make the class situation useful and productive.

A. Always have a session agenda and stick to the topic. (see 2C above)

B. Always begin on time and stay within agreed upon time blocks.

C. Emphasize the use of the target language. The tutor should try at first to explain things, directions, concepts and so forth in the target language using English only if absolutely necessary (the use of English is usually a hinderance rather than an aid to learning another language).

D. Drills should be run smoothly with no delays or interruptions. If the learners are taking too long to respond, it will be necessary to simplify or change the drill. The instructions for running each drill are given along with each drill in the communications handbook. A drill can be simplified either by skipping the drill altogether or by eliminating some of its complexity. One way to do this is to treat the drill like a dialog to be learned (see instructions for learning dialogs in the communications handbook). Once familiar with the content of the drill, it can then be reintroduced as a drill; this time with better results.

Another way is to have the students read the drill from the textbook, though the normal way to run a drill is without student use of textbooks. These drills should also be recorded onto tape so that they can be replayed as one of the homework activities.

If you and the class are still having trouble with a drill, ask the lanugage supervisor or whoever is in charge of the program to help you.

While many tutors think that they have to provide more than this, this is all that is truely necessary. But, at the same time, the ability to do these things is very important. Because of this, the above points are discussed in more detail below.

A. Speaking Clearly

When you speak your language to your students, you should try to speak at a normal rate of speed. This means that you should not speak too rapidly as if you were in a hurry, or too slowly, as if you were talking to a small child.

B. Being Patient

It is important to remember that learning a language is a slow process because it requires a lot of learning: not only new words, but new ways of saying things which are very different from the way that the learner is used to saying things. You will find that a learner will forget much of what you tell him and that is why you must repeat things frequently: dialogs, storys, drills and so forth. From the viewpoint of the tutor, it appears as though the learners are not very smart. This is why it is so necessary for the tutor to be very patient with the learner.

C. Correcting Responses

While it is important to be patient, it is also necessary to correct errors in the responses that learners give. If they say something incorrectly, they should be told that it is incorrect and be asked to say it again correctly. One way to do this is to simply repeat the response correctly following an incorrect response. The learner hearing this will then correct his response following the model of the tutor. If it is a matter of pronunciation, and the student is unable to pronounce it correctly after two or three tries, then the tutor should tell the learner that the pronunciation is still incorrect, but that it will be possible for him/her to correct it later on. Remember, if the student is shown that his pronunciation of certain sounds is incorrect, the chances are that the student will learn to pronounce the sounds correctly in time.

CHAPTER IV

KPELLE SHORT SUMMARY REFERENCE GRAMMAR

Preliminary Remarks

This reference grammar is a summary of the basic grammatical structures in Kpelle. It is written for the general reader. Those who wish more detail or a more sophisticated linguistic analysis are referred to the linguistic materials available in professional publications, particularly those of William Welmers on phonology and morphology. As much as possible, I have tried to use Welmers' terminology to reduce confusion. The reader is expected to refer to other sections of this handbook for detail on Mande phonetics and the Mande languages.

THE SOUNDS OF KPELLE

You will understand and pronounce Kpelle better if you begin your study with the Introduction to Liberian Languages. This section provides an introduction to hearing and producing the sounds of Kpelle. You will find it helpful to review this lesson periodically throughout your study.

To speak Kpelle well, you must first learn to hear it. Many times you will think you are hearing - and even speaking - correctly, only to find that you are mistaken. Try to practice the drills in this lesson until you are fairly proficient, then the rest of the lessons will be easier and you will learn faster.

The Alphabet

The sounds of Kpelle are represented by the following alphabet. Examples of words containing each sound are given. Have your tutor pronounce them for you. (You may want to tape these at the end of the session so that you can listen to them as you have time.) Be careful - do not expect the letters to represent the same sounds as they do in English. The two-letter combinations like /gb/ and /kp/ represent single sounds.

Sound	Examples		Notes
/a/	ɓala	'sheep'	similar to /a/ in 'mama'
	namu	'fight'	
	sále	'medicine'	
/ã/	fãa	'wind'	strongly nasal
	sã́a	'honest'	
/b/	bɛ̀rɛ	'trousers'	some speakers do not distinguish
	bɔ̂ki	'bucket'	this sound from /ɓ/
	bàla	'bush dog'	
/ɓ/	ɓá	'rice (cooked)'	
	ɓéla	'split'	
	ɓɔ́	'open'	
	sɔ̂ɓɔ	'groundhog'	

Sound	Examples		Notes
/d/	da	'and'	
	Dɛniŋ	'April'	
	Dukɔ̂ɔ	'Monrovia'	
/e/	de	'river'	this is not like English sound /ay/ in 'say' - listen carefully
	nêne	'which'	
	pene	'turn'	
/ẽ/	kpẽla	'water deer'	
/ɛ/	lɛlɛ	'good'	
	mɛni	'business'	
/ɛ̃/	fiɛ̃	'head pad'	
/f/	fãa	'wind'	
	folo	'shine'	
/g/	gãla	'box'	
	gwe	'banana'	
/gb/	gbai	'corn'	this is not /g/, /b/, or /ɓ/
	gbɔ́mɔ	'wasp'	
	gbɛ̂ɛ	'who'	
/ɣ/	ɣau	'yam'	
	ɣɛlɛ	'when'	
	ɣele	'day'	
/i/	íláa	'your name'	this represents 2 sounds: the vowel similar to /e/ in 'he' and the vowel similar to /i/ in 'hit'
	gbìŋ	'bed'	
	mina	'spoon'	
	pili	'throw'	
/ĩ/	sĩi	'spider'	
	tĩya	'taboo'	
/k/	káa	'see'	
	kɛ́	'do'	
	kôlo	'poor'	

Sound	Examples		Notes
/kp/	kpao	'no'	contrast with /gb/
	kpɛɛ	'finish'	
	kpɔ kpɔ	'knock-knock'	
/l/	ĩláa	'name'	this is similar to English /l/ in some dialect areas and less similar in others. Follow your tutor's pronunciation.
	lɛ́lɛ	'good'	
	lí	'go'	
/m/	mɛni	'business'	
	muluŋ	'dust'	
	mina	'spoon'	
/n/	naaŋ	'four'	
	naa	'there'	
	nîa	'older sibling'	
/ny/	nyii	'sleep'	like /ny/ in 'canyon'
	nyɔɔ	'bad'	
	nyɛɛ	'fish'	
/ŋ/	ŋɔni	'bird'	similar to /ng/ in 'sing'
	naaŋ	'four'	
	íŋuŋ	'your head'	
/o/	owèi	'yes'	
	kôya	'far away'	
	kôlo	'poor'	
/ɔ/	lɔɔ	'market'	
	kɔlɔ	'book'	
/ɔ̃/	gɔ̃ɔ	'crow'	
	pɔ̃yɛ	'write'	
/p/	pala	'weave'	
	pɔlɔ	'get old'	
/s/	saa	'today'	
	sama	'gift'	

Sound	Examples		Notes
/t/	taaŋ	'one'	
	koti	'coat'	
/u/	puu	'ten'	
	tuna	'rain'	
	nua	'people'	
/ũ/	fũa	'powder'	
	ísũa	'nose'	
/v/	vɔ̀lɔ	'black snake'	
	va	'comb'	
/w/	wala	'thousand'	
	woo	'language'	
/y/	yaɓa	'onion'	
	yee	'hill'	
	yɔɔ	'wet'	
z	zoo	'doctor'	

Tones

There are three levels of tones in Kpelle: high, mid, and low. Further, there are two contour tone patterns: high to low, and mid to high to low. They are marked on the vowel as follows:

high - /´/	zóo	'native doctor'
mid - /no mark/	tuna	'rain'
low - /`/	nyɔ̀ɔ	'be afraid'
high-low - /^/	sâa	'today'
mid-high-low - /^/	tisô	'sneeze'

PHONOLOGY

1. Consonants (as represented in the orthographic system)

p	t	k	kp
b	d	g	gb
f	s		
v	z		
b	l	γ	
w	r	y	
m	n	ŋ	

Dialect Notes

a. In the areas nearest the coast, /s/ is similar to the English /s/. In the middle section of Kpelle territory, it is often closer to English /sh/; while in the northern areas, it is often pronounced as an English /h/.

b. In the northern areas, an /l/ will often sound midway between /l/ and /n/ when it is the first sound in a word, or sometimes be replaced altogether by /n/.

c. In the northern areas, /γ/ between two vowels will often be elided or changed to a /y/ type sound.

d. In the northern areas, an /r/ between two vowels (as written in the texts) will be pronounced as an /l/.

2. Vowels

	Front	Mid	Back
High	i		u
Mid	e		o
	ɛ		ɔ
Low		a	

a. Vowels may occur long or short. When long, they are written as two vowels.

b. Round back vowels, when followed by a front vowel, are less rounded and somewhat more fronted.

c. /i/ after /ɣ/ is not pronounced.

d. Nasalization is significant. There is a difference in meaning between sĩi, 'spider' and sîi, 'tribe', for example.

3. Tones, Stress, Intonation

a. There are three pitch levels: high, mid, and low.

b. There are five possible patterns in a word:

high throughout:	pέlε	'also'
mid throughout:	pεlε	'to start'
low throughout:	pὲlε	'small'
high to low:	-pε̂rε	'side (of the body)'
mid to high-low:	pɔm[illegible]	'germinate'

c. Words with high, high-low, and low tone patterns have stress on the initial syllable. Mid-high-low have stress on the second vowel, since this stress is automatic and does not differentiate one word from another (as English stress does in 'progress' as a noun and 'progress' as a verb). In the area around Gbarnga, /k/, /g/, and, most frequently /ɣ/ are not pronounced when they are in an unstressed syllable between two front vowels.

d. In some words, the pattern high or high-to-low becomes high-to-mid. These are marked in the Totota orthography.

e. The patterns presented apply to words without prefixes or suffixes. Affixes carry their own tone patterns.

f. In a pause, usually marked in writing by a comma, as in English, the last syllable tone will rise sharply, and a slight pause will ensue.

g. To mark a question: the last non-low tone will be noticeably higher. If the sentence has only low tones, all low tones are slightly higher and tense.

4. Other

a. After a mid tone, low tone becomes high-low.

Example: pɛ́rɛ tɔ̀nɔ 'one house'

taa tɔ̂nɔ 'one town'

b. Kpelle, like several other Mande languages, changes the initial consonants of some words when a nasal sound (/m/, /n/, /ŋ/) comes before it, or when a low tone is placed on the syllable. This happens frequently in Kpelle. These are the changes:

p → b
t → d
k → g
kp → gb
f → v
s → v

ɓ → m
l → n
ɣ → ŋ
w → ŋw (or ŋ before u, o,ɔ)
y → ny or n

WORDS AND CONSTRUCTIONS

Nouns and Noun Phrases

1. Independent and Dependent Nouns (Alienable and Inalienable)

Independent nouns are items which are either abstractions which are not usually possessed by anyone or items which can be obtained and disposed of by a person. Independent nouns may occur with or without a possessor indicated.

Dependent nouns are those items regarded as integral parts of the possessor - they cannot be transferred or discarded. Most of these nouns are body parts, relatives, or membership names. They always must have an identified possessor. Dependent nouns fall into two groups - persons and non-persons. Persons alternate consonants, while non-persons do not.

Example: ì lee 'your mother' gâloŋ ǹee 'the chief's mother'

ì pôlu 'your back' gâloŋ pôlu 'the chief's back'

Persons also have a plural form: the suffix /-ni/ (after /ŋ/, /-nìi/).

Example: í lóŋ 'your child' í lônii 'your children'

There are also some dependent nouns derived from verbs by the addition of a suffix /-ì/.

Example: see 'sit down' í seêi 'your seat'

2. Plurals

Most Kpelle nouns have a single form to represent both singular and plural. Whether there is one or more of something than one is indicated by the context. However, there is one category of nouns which does have a plural form - nouns which name or refer to people, such as mother, father, child, etc. The plural is indicated in this way when the noun is dependent: (pronoun) + noun + ni. (If a noun ends in /ŋ/, it will have a /nìi/ for the plural.)

When the noun is independent, the plurals are varied. They will be given in the vocabulary in the beginning. If you learn a word which you think should have a plural, ask your tutor.

Examples:	núu	'person'	nûa	'people'
	lôloŋ	'child'	nîa-pɛlɛɛ	'children'

3. Possessive

In marking possession, the possessor always comes immediately before the possessed noun. Generally, the first noun will be in the specific form.

Example:	Nôloŋ goi	'the child's stomach'

A pronoun is also used with dependent nouns if it is a noun denoting a person.

Example:	Nôloŋ nèe	'the child's mother'

4. Specific and Non-Specific Nouns

In English there is a difference between "the table" and "a table". Kpelle makes a similar, but not identical, reference. For example, in English we always say, "the sun is shining", but Kpelle uses the nonspecific form: "a sun is shining." On the other hand, a amle to whom you owe respect is always addressed by his title in the definite form: "the Sir." Others may or may not receive such a mark of respect. Dependent nouns almost never occur in the specific form.

The specific is indicated by:

low tone + noun + ì

Examples:

pέlɛ	house	bέlɛì	the house
ɓoli	goat	molíì	the goat
wúlu	tree	nwúliì	the tree

The low tone affects the initial consonant (see the Grammar Note in Lesson 1.) There are two additional notes:

a. When a word ends with a /ŋ/, then the /-i/ suffixed is lost.
Example: gâloŋ...'the chief'.

b. The two falling tones fall only to mid in the specific.
Example: kâloŋ...'chief' gâloŋ...'the chief'

c. When the word ends in /u/, it will change to an /i/ when the /-i/ suffix is added.
Example: wúru...'tree' nwúriì...'the tree'

d. An /N/ may accompany the low tone.
Example: wúru...nwúriì

One additional note: if there are two or more adjectives and the noun in the specific, only the last adjective has the specific marker as well.

5. Compounds

Two or more words may be combined to form a new word. In all compounds, the final stem has a low tone (or high-low if the preceding word has a mid-tone).

Examples:

kɔlɔ	'book'	láa	'leaf'	kɔlɔ-lâa	'page'
tóu	'palm nut'	wúlɔ	'oil'	tóu-wùlɔ	'palm oil'
kéleŋ	'motor vehicle'	pere	'path'	kéleŋ-père	'road'
tέɛ	'chicken'	-ɣáloŋ	'egg'	tέɛ-ɣàloŋ	'chicken egg'
mii	'to eat'	sále	'medicine'	mii-sálə	'pill'

A special class of compounds are reduplicative forms.

Example: kpɛ̀ya-kpɛ̀ya 'important'

6. Noun phrase

The word order for a noun phrase is as follows:

1) possessor; 2) noun; 3) adjective; 4) numeral; 5) specific suffix;
6) demonstrative pronoun.

Pronouns

1. Subject Pronouns

Kpelle has three sets of subject pronouns. Note that it distinguishes between a singular and plural 'you'.

Affirmative - for Present, Future, Customary tenses

	Singular		Plural	
1st	ŋa	'I'	kwa	'we'
2nd	ɓa (ya)	'you'	ka	'you'
3rd	a	'he, she, it'	da (di)	'they'

Negative - for Present, Future, Past, Hortative-Consecutive tenses

	Singular	Plural
1st	fé	kúfé
2nd	ífé	káfé
3rd	vé	dífé

Affirmative - for Past, Hortative-Consecutive tenses

	Singular	Plural
1st	ŋá	kú
2nd	í	ká
3rd	è (é)	dí

Affirmative - for Conditional tense

	Singular	Plural
1st	ŋà	kwà
2nd	ɓà	kà
3rd	à	dà

Negative - for Customary tense

	Singular	Plural
1st	fa	kúfa
2nd	ífa	káfa
3rd	va	dífa

Negative - for Contrary to Fact, Conditional tenses

	Singular	Plural
1st	ŋâi	kûi
2nd	îî	kâi
3rd	èì	dîi

The forms below are alternative pronoun formations. The first set really represents the verb káa + a subject pronoun. It is often used as a substitute for the pronoun alone.

I'm coming.	ŋ́gáa pâi.	ŋa pâi.
You're coming.	íkáa pâi.	ba pâi. (ya pâi.)
He's coming.	gáa pâi.	ˋa pâi.
We're coming.	kúkáa pâi.	kwa pâi.
You're coming (pl.).	kákáa pâi.	ka pâi.
They're coming.	díkáa pâi.	da pâi.

2. Object Pronouns

	Singular		Plural	
1st	Ń	'me'	kú	'us'
2nd	í	'you'	ká	'you'
3rd	ˋ	'him, her, it'	dí	'them'

These pronouns come directly before the verb.

Examples:	ŋgáa	'see me'
	kúlɛ́	'teach us'

3. Indirect Object

In English it is possible to say either 'give me the book' or 'give the book to me.' Kpelle also distinguishes between an object (book in the above example) and the person to whom things are given, said, shown, etc. For this second function Kpelle uses a special set of pronouns:

mà	me	kûa	us
yâ	you	kâa	your
m̀à	him/her/it	dîa	them

These always come after the verb as in:

è m̀ò mâ.	"He told it to me."

You will find that many of the Kpelle verbs which use this "ma" series are the same as those in English which are "to me" verbs. But this is not always the case. In Kpelle, for example, "help" ...kpɔŋ, uses the "ma" series, while "give"...fé uses a different pronoun set altogether, the "mi" series. Hint: Use "ma" whenever the sentence seems to require a "to ___" form. You will be right more often than not. Whenever you notice a verb with a "ma" after it, take note of it, so you will remember.

The "mi" series generally indicates 'on behalf of' or 'for'.

mî	kûe
yê	kâa
m̀ì	dîɛ

Example:	Gɛ mî.	'Do it for me.'

4. Possessive Prounouns

Independent Nouns

ŋá	'my'	kú	'our'
í	'your'	ká	'your'
ŋò	'his, her, its'	dí	'their'

When a possessive pronoun is used, the specific suffix must be placed on the noun.

Example:	ŋápɛrɛí	'my house'

Dialect Variation: The singular possessive pronouns vary somewhat. In the northern areas you may hear /ŋɔ́/ or /a/ for 'my', /é/ for 'your', and /ŋà/ for 'his, her, its'. Thus, listen carefully for what your informant and neighbors say. Also, make sure you use the right tone or there may be some confusion.

Dependent Nouns

Dependent nouns require a possessor.

Ń	'my'	kű	'our'
í	'your'	ká	'your'
	'his, her, its'	dí	'their'

Examples:	ńâŋ	'my father'	kúnâŋ	'our father'
	ínâŋ	'your father'	kánâŋ	'your father' (pl.)
	ǹaŋ	'her father'	dínâŋ	'their father'

5. Independent Pronouns

Independent pronouns are used in marked complement construction and also in some emphatic situations. These are:

nyá	'I'	kuá	'we'
fá (yá)	'you'	káa	'you'
ǹyà (là)	'he, she, it'	dia	'they'

Examples:	nyá b̂e.	'It's me.'
	lí à dia.	'Take them.'

6. Conjunctive Pronouns

kà	you
dà	he
dwà	we

Conjunctive pronouns are used only with another noun or a singular pronoun in this format:

pronoun _____ pronoun + remainder of sentence

Examples:

Dà Moses da pâi.	"He and Moses are coming."
Kwà Moses kwa pâi.	"Moses and I are coming."

This can also be used to express the idea of accompanying someone or some people. Thus, the sentences above could also be translated "He is coming with Moses" and "I am coming with Moses."

7. Compound Expressions

The first element of a compound expression is the pronoun ka, da, or kwa.

The second element is: a pronoun showing either the person you are speaking to, or those you are speaking about.

The third element, -ni, occurs only after kâa or dîa to indicate that the whole reference group encompasses more than two people.

Examples:	da ǹyaa	'they (including him)'
	da diâ-ni	'they (including more than 2)
	kwa yá	'you and I'
	ka ǹyaa	'you and he' (you including him)

The subject pronoun in the sentence follows three pronouns and agrees in person and number with the first pronoun in the combination. So:

Kwa ǹya kú lì daai su.	'We (he and I) went into town.'
Ka Flomo ká lì?	'Did you go with Flomo?'

8. -pɔ

-pɔ is a dependent noun which occurs frequently in Kpelle. Basically, it expresses two kinds of ideas: indirect object and possession. To an English speaker it will seem like a pronoun. Examples of its use: "give it to us"...dɛɛ kúpɔ́; "where is your home?"...ipɔ taai kɔɔ. Sometimes it will best be translated as a possessive pronoun - ours, mine, his, etc. But in Kpelle, it is a dependent noun.

Adjectives

Adjectives function differently in Kpelle from the way they do in English. First, there are 2 major classes of adjectives: predicating and attributing. Predicating adjectives, by far the largest class, are derived from verbs. In other words, if you know the verb, you can predict the adjective form. The meaning, however, may differ slightly from the meaning of the verb from which it was derived. The word kɛ́tɛ, 'big' is the only adjective that does not differ from the verb form. The chart below shows you how adjectives are formed. Although this chart will help you produce the right adjective forms, fluency will only come when you are so familiar with the adjective forms that you do not have to use these forms.

Verb Stem

	Monosyllabic Stem Consonant + Vowel	Bisyllabic Stem. Consonant + Vowel + Consonant + Vowel	Consonant + Vowel + Vowel
Suffix ɛ́	C + i, e, or ɛ	CVC + i, e, or ɛ	C V + i, e, or ɛ
Suffix á	C + a	CVC + a	C V + a
Suffix ɔ́	all others	all others	all others

Examples:

táma	"to be plentiful"	támaa	"a lot of"
lɛ́lɛ	"grow, flourish"	lɛ́lɛɛ	"fine, nice, pretty"
kpɔlu	"get ripe, redden"	kpɔluɔ	"ripe"
wiɛ	"get heavy"	wiɛɛ	"heavy"

Note: the suffix has a high tone except when the stem has a low tone; then the suffix tone is also low.

Alternatively, the adjective can be formed by simply altering the tone of the verb: low tone replacing the stem tone and high-low where there is a mid tone on the noun it modified.

Example:

yɔɔ	"get dry"
seɣe yɔ̂ɔ	"dry clothes"

1. Uses of Adjectives

More important are the uses of adjectives. They can be predicative - that is, act as a verb. Remmeber, not all adjectives can be used this way.

object + adjective stem + suffix vowel + ì

Examples:

fãâi	"It's hot."
ǹyái fãâi.	"The water is hot."
kú kɛ̂tɛi	"We are big."

Note: the English translation uses a subject where Kpelle uses an object.

Negative: fé + adjective stem + ní

Examples:

Fé fãa ní.	"It is not hot."
Ǹyái fé fãa ní.	"The water is not hot."
Kúfé kɛ́tɛ́ ní.	"We are not big."

Adjectives can also be used with a noun to form compound words. And as in the case of compounds, the second member (the adjective) has a low tone.

Example:

fólo	"empty"
sɛŋ-folo	"dish"

The English speaker will find it difficult at first to know when to use the verb stem and when to use the adjective stem as if it were a verb. Generally the verb stem is used in descriptions ..."That girl is pretty."...not "That is a pretty girl." Also, the predicative implies only that a certain quality is present. The verb is used in expressing the activity, how the subject got the quality, who made it so, etc. So, in saying something is red, we use the adjective form "kpɔluɔ." If we want to say it got dry, will be dry, the sun dried it, etc., we use the verb form "kpɔlu."

Verbs can also function as nouns without adding any suffixes. For example: ŋúma..."to steal":

A ŋ̀umài.	"He is stealing it." (low tone marks the object it)
A ŋúma kɛ̂i.*	"He is making steal."
ŋ̀umaài.	"He is a thief."

*ŋúma is a noun here, the object of the verb kɛ..."to make, do."

2. Adjectives as Nouns

Adjectives can also be used as nouns. For example:

kɛ́tɛ	"big"
gɛ́tɛ	"a big one"
gɛ́tɛi	"the big one"

The speaker assumes that you know which things are being discussed.

3. Adjectives as Adverbs

They also function as adverbs - in marked complement phrases.

à + low tone + adjective

Note: a is the preposition or particle meaning with.

Examples:

Kɛ́ à ǹɛ́lɛɛ.	"Do it well."
Gaa à ǹɛ́lɛɛ.	"It is good."
Ɛ̀ kɛ̀ à ǹɛ́lɛɛ.	"It was good."

Note: the kaa forms are equivalent in meaning tɔ the regular predicative. The "è kɛ̀" forms indicate past.

4. Comparisons

English has comparison using different forms of the adjective - large, larger, largest. In Kpelle, there is no change in the adjective for any of these meanings. Often, the meaning comes from the context: if you ask what animal is big, by implication you are asking which is biggest. When the meaning is unclear, Kpelle speakers will express the comparison explicitly using the verb tiɛ to pass or surpass. So: for something ___er than something else:

é tɛ́ɛ ... ma -er

Example:

zeɣei ŋí ǹɛ́lɛɛ̂i é tɛ́ɛ nyita ma.
"This shirt is better than that one."
Literally: this shirt is good, it surpasses that one.

If something is the ---est:

noun + specific + adjective + specific

Example:

zeɣei ǹɛ́lɛɛi	"the best shirt"

If two things or actions are similar:

.... yêe .... (for things)

Example:

zeγe ŋí ǹɛ́lɛɛ̂i yɛ̂ɛ nyiti.
"This shirt is pretty like that one."

... yɛ̂ɛ berei ...	for activities, abilities, etc.

Example:

Fa sɛŋ kâa yɛ̂ɛ berei ya gàa lai.
"I don't see the way you do."

Numerals

1. Numbers

The Kpelle numbers 1-10 are as follows:

tɔnɔ	1	lɔ́ɔlu mɛi da	6
feerɛ	2	lɔ́ɔlu mɛi feer	7
saaɓa	3	lɔ́ɔlu mɛi saaɓ̂a	8
náaŋ	4	lɔ́ɔlu mɛi náaŋ	9
lɔ́ɔlu	5	puu	10

To express a number 11-99, this is the form:

puu _X_ kau _X_

If you are expressing 20, 30, 40, etc., then it is just:

puu _X_

Examples:

puu feerɛ = 20
10 + 2 = 20

puu káu lɔɔ lu mɛi feerɛ = 17
10 kau + 7 = 17

puu saaɓa káu feerɛ = 32
10 + 3 kau + 2 = 32

To say a number in the hundreds:

ŋun (pôlu) 10's _____

Examples:

ŋuŋ tɔ̀nɔ pôlu puu náaŋ káu ŋaŋ = 144
100 4 polu 4 kau 4 = 144

ŋuŋ lɔ́ɔ lu mɛi feerɛ = 700
100 x 7 = 700

To say a number in the thousands:

wála _____ŋuŋ _____ _____ _____

Examples:

wála feerɛ ŋuŋ saaɓa pôlu puu = 2310
1000 + 2 100 + 3 polu + 10 = 2310

Note: In counting, the lɔ́ɔlu of lɔ́ɔlu mɛi da, etc.. is usually omitted.

2. Numerals

Numerals are similar to nouns in Kpelle. They can be given a prefixed low tone to indicate that a certain number of the total is being discussed and are known to speaker and hearer:

tɔ̀nɔ	'one'	dɔ̀nɔ	'one of them'
ta	'some'	da	'some of them'

If the numeral is modifying a noun, however, then the low tone only affects the noun and the number keeps its stem form.

Example:

bɛrɛ ta	"some houses (of those already mentioned)"

The specific suffix can also be indicated with numbers:

tɔ̀nɔ...'one'	dɔ̀nɔ....'one of them'	dɔ̀nɔi...'the only one'
feerɛ..'two'	veerɛ...'two of them'	veerɛi..'the two of them' 'both of them'

Note that neither ta nor keelee takes the specific.

3. Noun + Number

In Kpelle, the noun comes first, then the numeral.

Example:

tɛ́ɛ naaŋ	"four chickens"

There are several words which act as numerals.

Example:

ta	"some, any"
kélee	"all"
tɛɛ támaa káa ɓɛ́.	"There are a lot of chickens here."
támaa	"a lot of, many"

Do not use the specific form for the independent (the first) noun. You can use numbers without the noun.

Example:

veerɛ	"2 of them"
veerɛi	"the 2 of them"

Other

1. Identification

To ask what the name of an object is, you say:

Lé ɓe ní? - 'What is it?'
Lé ɓe ŋí? - 'What is this?'
Lé ɓe tí? - 'What is that?'

The answer is:

X ká ŋí. - 'This is X.'
X ká tí. - 'That is X.'

Examples:

Lé ɓe ŋí? - 'What is this?'
Kpee ká ŋí. - 'This is a chair.'

2. Location

"Where questions are very similar to "what" questions. The form is as follows:

_____ lá kɔɔ?	Where is _____?
_____ lá ɓɛ́.	_____ is here.
_____ la naa.	_____ is there.

Examples: Kpee lá kɔɔ? 'Where is the bench?'
Kpee lá ɓɛ́. 'The bench is here.'

Location and identification sentences both form their negative in the same way:

_____ fé ŋí.	'This is not _____.'
_____ fé tí.	'That is not _____.'
_____ fé ɓɛ́.	'_____ is not here.' or: 'There is no _____ here.'
_____ fé naa.	'_____ is not there.' or: 'There is no _____ there.'

Examples:

Kpee fé tí.	'That is not a bench.'
Kpee fé naa.	'There is no bench there.'

A variant is this:

_____ féi.	'This/that/it is not _____.' '_____ is not here/there.' 'There is no _____ here/there.'

The meaning of the statement depends on what was asked.

Example:	Kpee féi.	'This isn't a bench.' 'There is no bench here.' etc.

3. How Much/How Many

The Kpelle word yɛɛlu is a question word requesting information about quantity. It translates into English as either 'how much' or 'how many'.

Examples:

How much (does it cost)? = γɛɛlu ɓe?
How many are there? = γɛɛlu káa naa?
How many ___ did you bring? = Yá pà à ___ γɛɛlu?

4. Locatives

In English we usually describe the location of something by using a prepositional phrase - "in the box," "on the table," etc. Kpelle uses a system of nouns to express these ideas. You have already learned here/there. (naa/ɓɛ). As you can see in the dialogue and text, the other locative expressions are noun phrases: generally an independent noun followed by a dependent noun. Formally it is:

> possessor noun + locational/spatial noun, dependent
> + specific form

Examples:

Possessor Noun			Dependent Noun	
pɛrɛ	'house'	+	mù	'space inside'

= ɓɛ́rɛi mu...'inside the house'

pɛrɛ	'house'	+	lá	'space at, space near'

= ɓɛ́rɛi la...'near the house'

Nɛnîi gáa ɓɛ́rɛi mu...'The woman is in the house.'

Further, if you want to indicate the location of the activity expressed by the rest of the sentence, this phrase is placed after the verb. If placed elsewhere in the sentence, these noun phrases can be used to express slightly different ideas:

as indirect object: kú kàa ɓɛrɛi mù..."We looked inside the house."

as the subject: ɓɛ́rɛi mù tɛi......"The inside of the house is big."

5. Marked vs. Unmarked Complements

In Kpelle only a few phrases come after the verb in a sentence. These phrases are generally referred to as complements. There are two types of complements. Those labeled unmarked are so called because they carry no explicit grammatical marking.

Examples:	bɛ́rɛi káa daai pôlu.	'The house is on the other side of town.'
	bɛ́rɛi káa naa.	'The house is there.'

Others are called marked complements; for example, Gɛ́ a maa felaa., 'Do it quickly.' /a/ is the marker. The important point: these are the only types of phrases which come after the verb in Kpelle. Complements are a very small set of constructions in Kpelle.

6. Marked Complements

Kpelle uses a marker /a/ where in English we might use an unmarked object. Quite often the idea is "with something" or "in such and such a way." So, for example:

dí pà à nyɛ́ɛ.	"They brought fish."
is more literally:	"They came with fish."
è gɛ̀ à ǹɛ́lɛɛ.	"He did it well."
is more literally:	"He did it in a good way."

You will generally use this correctly if you can turn the sentence into a "how" question: "How did he do it?", "How did they come?"

/à/ is sometimes expressed in a pronoun form /lə̀/, which is just 'it', 'him', or 'her'. Thus, pá là, 'bring it.'

Note: a is the preposition or particle meaning with.

Examples:

Kɛ́ à ǹɛ́lɛɛ.	"Do it well."
K̀aa à ǹɛ́lɛɛ.	"It is good."
Ɛ̀ kɛ̀ à ǹɛ́lɛɛ.	"It was good."

Note: The kàa forms are equivalent in meaning to the regular predicative. The è kɛ̀ forms indicate past.

7. Objects

In Kpelle, all direct objects come before the verb.

Example: Kú zuai sóŋ. 'We catch animals.'

8. ɓe

Do not think of /ɓe/ as 'is'. It isn't. ɓe is used in two ways. The first is the use as part of the question 'What is this/that?' Notice that /ɓe/ is mid-toned, not high, in this phrase. (/ɓé/ with high tone occurs in questions about location.

9. Emphasis

ɓé is used in emphasizing a word or phrase in Kpelle. (In English we can resort to a change in voice tone. Do not try it in Kpelle.)

a. to emphasize the subject of a sentence...

subject + ɓé + ...

for present (conditions), past, and future, the subject pronoun is not present. In other tenses bé + pronoun forms ba.

Example:

Ǹee ɓaâ saa.	"His mother died." Lit: "His mother she died."

b. to emphasize an object: move the object to the front of the clause + ɓé + remainder of the sentence.

Example:

ŋá m̀ɔlɔŋ ŋí ǹyà.	"I bought this rice."
M̀ɔlɔŋ ŋí ɓé ŋá ǹyà.	"This is the rice I bought."

c. to emphasize a complement:

for marked complement: place complement without marker at the beginning of the sentence + ɓé followed by the remainder of the sentence + lǎ.

Example:

ŋá ŋ̀úrii tèe à gbêɣa.	"I cut the tree with a cutters."
Gbêɣa ɓé ŋá ŋ̀úrii tèe là.	"It was a cutters I cut the tree with."

for an unmarked complement: there are two forms which express a slightly different meaning. The first expresses the idea of emphasis on the particular location, while the second emphasizes where altogether. So, for example:

ŋá bù ǹeɣii sù.	"I poured it in the pot."

can be:

ǹeɣii ɓé ŋa bù ƶù.	"It was THE POT I poured it into."
ǹeɣii sù ɓé ŋá bù naa.	"It was the POT (not something else) I poured it into."

For the first type, the complement, but not the dependent locative word, is moved to front followed by ɓé and then the remainder of the sentence + the dependent noun with a 3rd singular possessive pronoun. In the second case, the whole phrase, including the noun, is moved, followed by ɓé, the remainder of the sentence and finally naa in the place of the complement. (Expressions of time may be treated as either object or marked complements.)

10. wɔ...'own'

wɔ is sometimes used to indicate or emphasize possession. Often it means that part of something is yours - you have a share.

Examples:

i wɔ lɔii	"your country"
ku wɔ mɔlɔŋ	"our rice (our share of the total)" (our own rice)

11. Next Week

ǹòkuì ŋí means next week unless used with a past construction; then it means last week.

12. Yes and No. "Owei" really means "what you said is correct", and "kpao" means "what you said is not correct." Thus the correct answer to "Don't you have bananas?" is "Owei" or "Yes, I have no bananas."

13. "Kpera ye" is often translated as "please". However, it is more indicative of supplication than the English please. It is quite polite Kpelle to omit a "please" where we feel it necessary in English. The Kpelle will use "kpera ye" where the request is seen as unusual or serious, or to indicate persistence. You can best learn its use by observing when it is used. (Also, the use of "I beg you" in Liberian English is parallel to "kpera ye" in Kpelle.)

14. Yá li miì-ta?

/ta/ is a word which makes the question more polite. This is Jorquellie Kpelle. In Sanoyea Kpelle, the word used is /na/. These are placed after the verb in short questions when addressing someone to whom you want to show respect or friendship. Failure to use them is not rude, however.

15. Connectives

Just as in other languages, sentences and words can be linked in many ways.

a. da which is usually translated as "and" joins only 2 nouns or a noun and a third person pronoun.

Example:

ŋá mɔlɔŋ yà da yaɓa.	"I bought rice and onions."
Sumo dà Fulomo pà.	"Sumo and Fulumo came."

b. kpɛ́ni fɛ̂i means "because" or "for". kpɛ́ni fɛ̂i means "It is not without a reason", so it always introduces the cause or reason for the previous statement.

Example:

Kpɛ́ni fɛ̂i, yá támaa káa naa.	"Because there is a lot of water there."

c. maa-mɛni na means "for this reason". (You also hear mɛni ma). It emphasizes that what you said is the reason.

Example:

Kú pà yaɓa mɛni mà.	"We came for onions."

d. à kɛ̀ tí means "in that case." It generally introduces a sentence and refers to what has just been said.

Example:

À kɛ̀ tí, fɛ̂ɛ í manaŋ míi.	"In that case, you'll have to eat cassava."

e. ǹyaa ɓé can be translated as "consequently" or "as a result." It can connect two clauses or introduce a sentence by referring to what has gone before.

Example:

Ǹyaa ɓé, ŋá lìi.	"And so I went."

f. kɛ́lɛ means "but" and for the most part is used just as in English.

Example:

Kɛ́lɛ, kú fe pá ní.	"But we didn't come here."

Relative Clauses

In Kpelle, a relative clause is a sentence marked with the specific suffix -i attached to the final word to indicate that it is functioning as a relative clause. The object or complement refers to what is in the relative clause portion:

Examples:

Fé ǹúui kɔlɔŋ è pài.
"I don't know who came."
Lit.: I-not the person know he it came.

Gáa gɔlɔi lónôi, Sumo è dɛ̀ɛ bɔi.
"He is reading the book that Sumo gave him."
Lit.: See him reading the book, Sumo he it gave to him.

(Sometimes, nyii ("who" "which") or yii may occur at the beginning of the main clause.) Of course, an entire sentence may serve as a sentence subject or modifier.

Examples:

Ǹúui è wɛ́ɛ pài, è lì sàa.	"The person who came yesterday went today."
ɓɛ́i kélee à lí nãai, ɓià máŋ ɓa pɔ̂ri lîi.	"Wherever he went, you may go also."

ɓɛ́i, which comes from ɓɛ́ + i, is used to make a relative clause indicating "where."

ɓɛ́i + clause + naa + ____ + i

Note: even if the final word in the phrase has a specific marker -i, still add an -i. If the word ends in -ii, however, do not add a third.

Example:

ɓɛ́i ŋa lîi naai...	"Wherever I'm going..."
ɓɛi ŋà lì naa a mɔlɔŋ...	"Where I took the rice..."

Verbs

1. Verb Forms

Present or Progressive	ŋa pâi. Fé pâi.	I am coming. I am not coming.	stem + ì stem + ì
Future	ŋa pâi pâi. Fé pâi pâi.	I will come. I will not come.	stem + ì stem + ì
Past	ŋá pà. Fé pá ní.	I came. I did not come.	low stem
Customary	ŋa pâ. Fa pâ.	I come. I do not come.	low low
Conditional	ŋà pà, ... ŋà wàla pá, ..	If I come, ... If I do not come, ...	low stem
Imperative	Pá! Ka pá! Ífé pà!	Come! (s.) Come! (pl.) Do not come!	stem low
Hortative-Consecutive	... ŋá pá ... fé pà	... and (I) came ... and (I) didn't come	stem low
Completed Action	ŋa pá.	I have come	stem
Irrevocable or Recently Completed Action	ŋaâ pá.	I have just come.	stem
Contrary-to-Fact Conditional	ŋâi pà, ... Fêi wàla pá, difêi lì.	If I had come, ... If I had not come, they would not have gone.	low stem low

from Spoken Kpelle
William E. Welmers
Liberia, 1955

2. Imperative

In Kpelle the imperative is expressed:

(ye) + verb stem - "you (sing.)"
kwa + verb stem - "we"
ka + verb stem - "you (pl.)"

Examples:	(ye) pá.	Come (sing.).
	ka pá.	Come (pl.).

This is used in the same situations as the English imperative.

The negative imperative is formed as follows:

negative pronoun + verb stem + low tone

Examples:	ifé pà.	Don't come (sing.).
	kafé pà.	Don't come (pl.).

3. Present Progressive

This is the same as the English /-ing/ form of the verb: "I am coming.", "He is cooking.", etc. In Kpelle, this form is expressed:

subject pronoun + verb stem - ì

Examples:

a pâi.....'he is coming'.....a - he + pá - come + í - ing
di lònoi.....'they are counting'.....di - they + lóno + ì

The negative is very similar.

negative subject pronoun + verb stem + ì

Examples:

vé pâi.	'He is not coming.'
dífe lônoi.	'They are not counting.'

This verb form is quite useful - think how often you use the English equivalent. There is also another similarity to English: it can be used to indicate something which will happen soon - he is coming (this afternoon). (The low tone of the suffix /ì/ affects mid tone verbs so that the sequence is mid - high - low. Example: a paâi...he is killing.)

4. Immediate Future

Just as in English we say, "I am going to go to school." with the meaning "I will go to school soon", Kpelle speakers say "na lii li"..."I am going to go." This is not the only future, but it is often used.

subject noun + liî + verb stem

Examples:

a liî mii.	'He is going to eat.'
di liî lɛ́.	'They are going to teach.'

5. Future

The future is expressed by:

subject pronoun + pâi + verb stem + ì

Examples:	ŋa pâi liî.	"I will go."
	a pài miì.	"He will eat."

The negative:

Fé pronoun + pâi + verb stem + ì

Examples:	Fe pâi liî.	"I will not go."
	Va pâi miì.	"He will not eat."

This is used when we use "will..." in English and also the future senses of "going to" as in "I'm going to town tomorrow."

6. Past Tense

The ordinary past, used to refer to activities that occurred before present is formed:

pronoun + verb + low tone (same as Hortative)

Examples:

è lòno.	'He spoke.'
kú ɓá mìi.	'We ate rice.'

Negative:

negative pronoun + verb stem + ní

Examples:

vè lónoní.	'He didn't speak.'
ífe mii ní.	'You didn't eat.'

7. Completive

This expresses the idea that a process or action is over (completed). For example, water is heating and when it is hot, it is hot: ǹyái aâ fãa - 'the water is hot.' It is finished getting hot. In other words, a completive expresses a state of being which is the result of previous activity. This is the commonly used verb form for the useful verb kaa, 'see', which, in Kpelle is seen as a verb expressing an outcome. You have looked for or at something and the result is that you see it. The formula for the completive is:

-aa pronouns + verb stem*

Example:	Daâ lí.	"They are gone."

(*Some verbs with mid-tone are high-tone after a high or mid-tone.)

The formula for the negative is:

fé + níì + verb stem + ní

Examples:	Difé nìi li ní.	"They haven't gone yet."
	Ǹyái fé nìi fãa ní.	"The water isn't hot yet."

This verbal expression has a slightly different meaning, than an adjective - like form:

a)	Ǹyái aâ fãa.	"The water is hot."	(Completive)
b)	Ǹyái fããi.	"The water is hot."	

Essentially the difference lies in the emphasis - on whether the interest is the outcome of a process or just a statement of fact. So in the example above, a) would be correct if you were waiting for the water to heat up; b) would be correct if you tested the water - it is hot or not.

8. Completive General

This differs in meaning from the completive (recent) only in that it makes no statement in itself about when something happened or how permanent the change in state is. The general form is not restricted to recent events.

ŋà pronouns + verb stem

Example:	a pá.	"He has come."
vs.:	a à pá.	"He has come (recently)."

The negative is the general past or the completive (recent). However, with some verbs - like do, promise, agree, believe - this verb form is emphatic. It essentially expresses the idea that the committment has been made and is not changed.

Some verbs - agree, promise, believe, do, etc. - sometimes use the completed action verb form for emphasis even though the speaker may be referring to a present activity.

Examples:

A fáa.	"He does agree." "He agrees." "He has agreed."

Using A fáa for the idea "He agrees/does agree" is more emphatic than A fáài..."He is agreeing."

9. Used to.

To express the idea "used to" when referring to a period prior to the last 4 or 5 months, you may use kaa (kana).

pronoun (present) + kâa + verb

Example:

e kâa kɛ́ à ǹɛ́lɛɛ.	"He used to do it well."

Negative:

fa + kàa + verb

Example:

fa kâa kɛ́ à ǹɛ́lɛɛ. "He didn't use to do it well."

10. Habitual

This verb form is used to describe an activity or ability that occurs as a matter of course such as "I go to church on Sundays," or "I eat rice with pepper."

present pronouns + verb + low tone

Example:

Da Kpɛ̀lɛe-woo ɓò. "They speak Kpelle."

This can express the idea "I come every day." "You swim (every day)."

11. Stative

Stative is a term used to refer to a class of verbs which use a marker to indicate a condition of being: I sitting, I am standing, etc. For now, you need only remember three of them: sit, stand, sleep. "-ni" is always used in Sanoyea Kpelle. In Jorquellie, it is sometimes omitted.

subject pronoun + a + stem + nì

Example: Kaa seênì..."You (pl.) are seated."

As you might suspect, it is not the commonest verb form.

negative pronoun + verb stem + (nì)

Example: Ifé sẽe (nì)...."You are not sitting."

12. Customary

This is simply the form of the verb used in discussing what is ordinarily or habitually true. In English we say things like "I speak English." "I go to shcool." These same ideas are expressed through use of the customary form in Kpelle.

pronoun + mid tone + a + verb stem + low tone

Example: Kwa kpɛ̀lɛɛ - woo ɓò..."We speak Kpelle."

Negative:

subject pronoun + fa + stem + low tone

Example: Kúfa kpɛ̀lɛɛ - woo ɓò..."We don't speak Kpelle."

fa	I	kú fa	we
ifa	you	ká fa	you
va	he, she, it	di fa	they

13. Hortative/Consecutive

First, look at the uses of this form of the verb. It is used to express ideas like "we should," "let's," "have someone do."

Examples:	é lí.	He should go.
	kú lí.	Let's go.

This form is also used for the second of two verbs when it expresses the result or goal of the first verb.

Examples:	pá íqáa.	Come and see it. (Lit. - Come you it see.)
	ŋá ŋwɛ̂lii ŋá lí.	I want to go. (Lit. - I it want I go.)

To form the hortative or consecutive:

pronoun + verb stem

These are the pronouns:

ŋá	I	kú	we
í	you (sing.)	ká	you (pl.)
é	she, he, it	dí	they

As you can see, they differ only in the singular from the other pronouns.

The negative is formed as follows:

negative pronoun + verb stem + low tone

If the first verb is negative, then the negative pronoun is not used for the second.

Examples:	fɛ̂ɛ vé pà.	It's necessary that he not go. He shouldn't go.
	fé ŋwɛ̂lii ŋá lì.	I don't want to go.

This verb form is also used for narratives (relating stories, etc.)

14. fɛ̂ɛ

If you use fɛ̂ɛ and a clause with the verb in the hortative-consecutive, then the meaning is that something is required. This is the idea we express in English as 'must' or 'have to.'

Example: Fɛ̂ɛ í lí. 'You must go.'

15. ɣele da - 'suppose ... then'

A sentence beginning with ɣele da, with the verb in the consecutive or the conditional, carries the meaning 'suppose ... then.'

Example: ɣele da núu pá, gɛ ... 'Suppose someone goes, then ...'

16. Contrary to Fact

The following verb form does just what the name suggests: used to tells of a condition or wish that is not true.

past pronoun + -ì + verb stem + low tone

or

past pronoun + stem + ì

Example:

ŋâi pà or ŋâi pài	"I wish I were coming..."
lòloŋ èì pà, èì	"If the child were coming...he"

Note: if you add a third action (if the child were going, he could take money and buy it), then use the consecutive for the third verb.

past pronoun + -ì + wàla + verb stem

Example:

èì wàla pá...	"If he hadn't come..."

then in the main clause use:

past negative pronoun + ì + stem + low tone

Note: alternatively the main clause may be: proncun + ì + fé + ì and/or the verb stem + ì.

Example:

kufèi pà.	"we would not have come"

This verb form can also be used to express "should have."

pronoun + ì + pɔ̀ri + stem + low tone

Example:

èì pɔ̀ri pà...	"he should have come"

17. The Conditional

Most often the idea expressed by this form can best be expressed as "when..." in English. Sometimes, "if..." will also be appropriate. This verb form is used to discuss something that has not happened or happens only sometimes, or is not specific.

pronoun + verb + low tone

Examples:

à mìi	"when he ate..."
à kpàla	"when it is dry..."

Pronouns:

ŋà	kwà
ɓà(ya)	kà
à	dà

Negative:

pronoun + là + verb stem

(or wàla)

Examples:

à là mii	"if he doesn't eat..."
à wàla kpála	"if it doesn't dry..."

Note: sometimes kɛ́ + verb stem + ì is used for the negative form. This is slightly different in meaning. Example:

à là kɛ́ ɓá miì.	"If he is not eating rice..."
a là ɓá mii.	"If he does not eat rice..."

Also, past action is often expressed by using a relative clause for the when...clause.

18. There are two other ways to express obligatory action:

a. Maa-nɛ̃ɛ + hortative-consecutive sentence means should do something.

Example:

Maa-nɛ̃ɛ ŋá wúle tóo.	"I should sing."
Maa-nɛ̃ɛ ŋá li.	"I should go."

b. Gaá sɛŋ + hortative-consecutive sentence expresses "need to" or "ought to."

Example:

Gáa sɛŋ ŋá wúle tóo.	"I ought to sing."
Gáa sɛŋ ŋá li.	"I need to go."

19. To Have

In Kpelle "to have something" is generally expressed by using a verbal form of "in my hand".

Independent nouns:

X káa + possessor pronoun + yée + ì

This is equivalent in meaning to "I am having it in my hand".

Negative:

X fé + yée + ì

There are a few other verbals of this sort: they have both noun and verb characteristics, and a meaning of place and continuous action.

Examples:

tɛ́ɛ káa ńyéèi.	"I have a chicken."
tɛ́ɛ fé nyéèi.	"I don't have a chicken."
mí ɓà ipɔ taâi?	"Where is your home?" (Where is the living place?)

20. kɔlɔŋ "to know" can also mean "to suppose" "to guess" or "to think."

a. To express a meaning of "I know something (now)" use the hortative-consecutive pronouns and the verb in the stem tone.

Example:

ŋá ǹũui kɔ́lɔŋ. "I know the man."

b. If a sentence follows kɔlɔŋ rather than just a nominal object, then the meaning is suppose, or guess.

Example:

ŋ̱á gɔ́lɔŋ a lîi. "I think she's going."

To express the idea of "know" in this context (with a sentence complement) kpɔ́ à gɛ́ɛ is used between kɔlɔŋ and the sentential clause.

Example:

ŋ̱á gɔlɔŋ kpɔ à "I know (for sure, for true)
gɛ́ɛ a lìi. she's going."

c. To express a past meaning, the auxiliary verb kɛ̀ is used.

pronoun + kɛ̀ a + kɔlɔŋ

or

pronoun + kɔlɔŋ + kɛ̀

Example:

ŋ̱á gɔ́lɔŋ kɛ̀ a lîi. "I knew she was going."

d. In all other tenses it has the meaning of "know."

21. wɛ́li

Wɛ́li has some parallel distinctions. However, in the present it is treated as a stative verb if you mean "like" or "love."

Example:

ŋ̱á ǹṹui ŋ̀wɛ́lini. "I like that person."

If kɛ̀ is used as an auxiliary with past tense, then wɛ́li means "want" rather than "like." To indicate the "want" meaning is present, use the regular present.

Examples:

ŋá ŋ̀wɛ̀li.	"I liked her."
ŋa kɛ a ŋwɛli.	"I wanted it."
(Note: use wɛli in an adjective form.)	
ŋa ŋ̀wɛlii...	"I want to..."

22. Kɛ is used before the verb stem + -i to indicate intensification. This can take several forms - as it answers the tense for the clause.

Examples:

è kɛ̀ pâi.	"He was coming."
a pâi kɛ̂i pâi.	"He will be coming."

23. À kɛ̀ is used when the speaker does not know whether an event will occur or not - corresponding to our "if." À kɛ̀ is placed before the remainder of the phrase which is in conditional form.

Examples:

à kɛ̀ à ɓá̩miì.	"If he eats rice..."
à kɛ̀ à kpàla.	"If it dries..."

24. Kɛ́ɛ is used to express the idea "while."

pronoun + kɛ́ɛ + verb

Example:

di kɛ́ɛ pâi.	"while they were coming..."
di kɛ́ɛ miì.	"while they were eating..."

25. The Conjunction kɛ́

Kɛ́ is used to connect two phrases which have the same subject. (These phrases do not express the idea of first one thing and then another - use consecutive for that.)

phrase + kɛ́ + phrase: verb with low tone

Examples:

A ɓá mii, gɛ́ seɣe pàla.	"He eats rice and weaves cloth."
A ɓá mii.	"He eats rice."
A seɣe pàla.	"He weaves cloth."

26. More Coordinate Sentences

a. Fɛ̂ɛ followed by the negative conditional or consecutive, but not at the beginning of the sentence expresses "except" or "unless".

Example:

Fe mii-sɛŋ wɛ̂lii fɛ̂ɛ tuma-laa.
"I don't want any food except greens."

b. If the verb occurs in another tense, then the idea is "before."

Example:

Ku pɔri liî fɛ̂ɛ é pá.
"We can go before he comes."

c. If until is meant, use: kwa pai + clause describing first activity then second clause.

Example:

Kwa pai kuláa mii ku lɛ́ɛ serîi Gbomue.
"We will eat before we reach Gbomue."

1.b and 1.c may both translate as "before" in English. The difference in Kpelle is this:

> Fêɛ "before" means that something must be done before the activity described in the second clause.
>
> Kwa pai "until" or "before" simply means the action will occur before the action in the second clause.

CHAPTER V

KPELLE-ENGLISH AND ENGLISH-KPELLE DICTIONARY

The process of writing a dictionary is a large and tedious process of checking and rechecking entries against usages not only by one speaker, but by many speakers. A good dictionary should contain samples of sentences to illustrate usage of the entry. What follows then by definition is less than a dictionary, but on the other hand it is more than a word list, for it does contain information on parts of speech, dialectal variants and usage. When using this dictionary the reader is encouraged to correct or modify transcription in the light of experience and to make additions when new words are identified.

DICTIONARY (KPELLE - ENGLISH)..........a to búlɔ-kwɛlɛɛ

A.

a
    particle used in post verbal phrases, often "with", "for" "by means of"

a
    (contraction of káa)

Âbɛ
    Harbel

âɓa
    hour

Âfɛko
    Ivory Coast

à fũo
    unconscious

a gɛ̀ɛ
    in order to

à gɛ̀ɛ leŋ
    how

a kɛ̀ (conj)
    in order to, so that

a kɛ́ ɓalo
    to be getting better

a maa felaa
    right away, immediately, soon

à tãi su-koya seye é lɛɛ kpɛɛ
    a long time to get well

B.

bàla
    rattan

bàla
    bush dog

bɛ̂lɛ
    trousers, pants

bɛnɛ
    still

bia
    beer

Bikâna
    Buchanan

Boŋ yeei ma
    Bong River

bɔ̂ki
    bucket

bɔliɛ-zu
    thin

ɓɔlɔ-pɔlɔ
    old, ancient

bɔrɔŋ-kpalai
    November

bɔ̃yɛɛ (see pɔ̃yɛ)
    color

búlɔ-kwɛlɛɛ
    eggplant

ɓ

ɓá
bear fruit

ɓá
cooked rice

ɓâa-kɛ-maa
to obey

ɓâa-kûla-maa
to disobey

ɓálo
to cure, to heal

ɓara
brass

ɓaraa-yée-mɛi-ɣaleɛ
to win

ɓarâŋ
fellowmate, peer, friend:
pl. barâa

ɓáre
trap: ɓáre tɛ́ 'set a trap'

ɓé
part. (used to emphasize subj., obj., compl. and after question words)

ɓɛ́ (adv)
here: ɓɛ́-pere 'this way',
ɓɛ́ ŋí ma 'over here', ɓɛ́i
kélee...naa (in phrase)
'wherever'

-ɓela (suff)
(irregular plural form of
núu): tíi kɛ́-nuu 'worker',
tíi kɛ́-ɓela 'workers'

ɓɛ́ɛla
black deer

ɓɛlɛ
respect

ɓɛlɛ-kpe-goi
(kpɔara)
hate

ɓɛlɛ toli bɔɔ
to invite

ɓɛŋ, ɓɛlɛŋ (Jorquellie)
chair, bench

ɓerei-ɓɔnɔ (Jorquellie)
wall

ɓɛsɛ
sesame: bɛsɛ-kao
'sesame seed'

ɓó
speak, open

ɓò (conj.)
(in phrase): kɛ́ ɓò
'and also'. Also:
gɛ́ ɓò, è ɓò.

ɓőa
knife

ɓòi
wild boar, bush hog, pig

ɓoli
goat

ɓőloŋ
resemble, looking like

ɓolôŋ
grave

ɓooŋ (variant)
arm

ɓooŋ wolo (variant)
armpit

ɓora-ɣale
bracelet

ɓɔɔlɔ	grow
ɓɔ̂lɔ	father-in-law
ɓɔɔlɔ-lɔŋ	son-in-law
ɓɔrɔ	hat, cap, bag sack
ɓɔsii kpaya-kpaya ŋa	money bus
bɔvuu	soft
bu gie ma	add
bùi	pig

D.

da	and
dàa-daa	doctor, nurse, medical person
da kúla zu	subtract
dâla	dollar
danai	September
dɛɛ-gie	thick
dɛ́niŋ	April
dɛnɛ̂ŋ	pond, lake
Dɛŋ	St. Paul River
dikâ	digger
digbɔ (Jorquellie)	small
Dõaŋ lɔii	Lofa County
Dɔ̃a-ŋa	Loma
dɔŋkɔ́rɔŋ	pawpaw, papaya
dɔ̂siŋ	dozen
Dûkɔɔ	Monrovia

F.

fáa
    answer

fãa
    hot, heat, get hot: i kɔlɔ fãâi yâ? 'Do you have a fever?'

fãa
    wind

fãa kɛ́tɛ
    storm

fála
    cut, tear

fanâ-ɓo
    offer

fé
    hand over, give

Fê yani
    day after tomorrow

feerɛ
    two: di feerɛ ŋɔɔ 'both of them'

féla
    wage due for work, taxes, tuition: dí í féla fè? 'Did they pay you?'

Felaide
    Friday

félaa
    a maa félaa 'fast, right away, immediately', imaa féla 'be fast'

féla-fe
    pay

fêɛ
    must, compelled: fêɛ é pá 'he must come'

fêɛ
    fan (rice)

fêlee-zoo
    nurse

féna
    mushroom

fɛnɛ-sɛŋ
    wild animal, meat

fɛ̃ŋ-kpalaŋ
    field (already burned)

fîe-fîe
    in a rush, with haste

fíi
    tiredness: ḿvíi aà kpɛɛ 'I'm tired'

-fîle
    first

fólo
    empty, vacant: sɛŋ-folo 'dishes'

fólo
    day, sun

fólo
    shine

fólo a _____ tɛ́ɛ
    _____ days ago

fólo-kpanâŋ
    umbrella (sun shade)

fólo-laa bo ɣele
    dry season

fólo maa láa
    noon

fólo tɛ́-ɛɛi ŋ̀uŋ ma
    afternoon

fólo tóo ɣele
sunny (sunshine time or season)

foŋ
5¢

-fûle
lungs

fúlɔi
first

fúloŋ
come loose, loosen: màa è fùloŋ 'she gave birth'

fulu
alive: fulu-sɛŋ 'living thing', fulu-laa 'life'

G.

gâla
fence

gãla
box, herb used to dye clothes black

gâli-kalai
May

gâloŋ
gallon

gamɛ́nɛ
orange: gamɛ́nɛ-loŋ 'lemon', gamɛ́nɛ kpaya kpaya 'grapefruit', gamɛ́nɛ pɛlɛ-pɛlɛɛ 'tangerine'

Gaŋ-taa
Ganta

gára
mat

gau-see gie-ŋa
bone setter

gàu-see gie-ŋa
set a bone

geêŋ
crab

gɛ̀-zu-feerɛ kwii zoo
doctor (M.D.)

Gîini
Guinea

Gilɛbo
Grebo

Gîo lɔii
Nimba County

Gîo
Gio

Gîsi
Gissi

gôi ~ gwêi
banana: gôi kpaya-kpaya
'plantains'

Gôla
Gola

gònoŋ
gourd, calabash

gotó
grasshopper, locust

goru
gold

gɔlɛ-ɣaloŋ-leei
January

gɔlɛ-ɣaloŋ-loŋ
December

guro-ɣale-nûu
jeweler

Gb

gbâa
almost

gba ɓɛ́lɛ
hat, helmet

gbai
corn

Gbâni
Bandi

gbêɣa
cutters

gbène fé lɛlɛɛ ni
unhealthy

gbene (gbune) kɛ́tɛ
fat

gbène-lɛ́lɛɛ
healthy

gbehe pɔliɛ zu
medium size

gbêɛ
who?

gbɛ kɛ̂ɛ
gourd

Gbɛlɛɛ lɔii
Bong County

gbiŋ
bed

gbiniŋ pú ma
lɔom

gbôɗo
leprosy: gbôdo-nuu
'leper'

gbôno
ring

gbolô	green, unripe
Gbôlo	Bassa
gbònoi lέlɛ (gɔ̀lɔi-pono)	healthy
gbóŋ-toloŋ	handbag
gbôra	one-half
gbôto	leprosy
gbɔ́mɔ	wasp
gbɔ̂-laa	a type of water green
gbɔrɔ	rice farm before burning, when all trees are cut
gbɔyɔɔi	July
gbûnɔ bele	eddoes
ɣâla-pɛrɛ	church
ɣale	break
ɣaleɛ	broken
ɣáloŋ	moon, month
ɣáu	yams
ɣele	day, sky, heaven: ɣele da 'someday, maybe, sometime', ɣele kέtɛ 'holiday', a ɣele-wala pɛpɛ 'at daybreak', ɣele-kuu 'working, day', a veerɛ-ɣelei 'the second time', ŋele-gbana 'thunder', ŋele-waai ŋi su 'this morning'
ɣelêi	upward, toward the sky: fwőo tέ ɣelêi 'speak louder'
ɣele-kɔlɔŋ	cloud
ɣele-waa	morning
ɣele-wii-fólo	sundown, sunset
ɣele-wu(lii)	evening
ɣɛɛlu	how much? how many?
ɣɛlɛ	when?

ɣɛ́lɛ
laugh

ɣɛli
rope

ɣɛli-kpɔ̀mɔ
nine

ɣîla
dog

ɣili maa sêɣe
Lapa, skirt

ɣíli
cook

ɣíli-pɛrɛ
cook shop

ɣiri
bunch, bundle

ɣiri
tie

H.

hâya (saa-ya)
rice bird

I.

í gbɛli
greeting

ikɔlɔ̂i ponoɔ̂i
Are you well?

K.

káa a vúlu
alive

káa búma
dead

káa kɔlɛ̂i
to be sick

kaa saâi
to be dying

kaaka wúru
cocoa tree

káaŋ
shoulders

kaâŋ-kau
feces

kafâlo
excuse me (to one person), ka kafâlo 'excuse me (to several persons)'

kala
grass, weed, trash, chaff, peeling, scale (of fish): ikala-kalai 'you are hard to deal with, stingy'

kala bő
to husk, to shell

kali
snake

kâli
hoe

kâloŋ
chief, king: kâloŋ-laa 'chiefdom'

káne
silver

kane-tɔ̃ɔŋ	tuberculosis
káŋ	wall
kâpa	one cent, penny
kara	spoiled, rotten
-kau	bone
(kéle)-lɔɔ (tóo-lɔɔ)	palm wine
kélee	all
kéleŋ	vehicle, boat, canoe, ship, car, truck: koôŋ-keleŋ 'airplane', yá ŋá-keleŋ 'ship, steamer boat', kéleŋ sia-nuu 'driver', kéleŋ-pere 'highway'
kêra	uncle (mother's brother)
kêre	palaver hut
kéreŋ	burn
kɛ́	do, be, happen, say: da kɛ̂ mà 'they call it...'
kɛ́lɛŋ-sia-nuu	doctor
kɛ̂tɛ	big, important
kìe	together, each other
-kíli	mind
-kili a gɛ́ɛ / a gɛ́ɛ -kili	remember (keep in mind)
kirɛ	speed, hurry, haste
kiyɛ̂ŋ	pepper
-koi / -kui / -koo	stomach: goi a tɛɛ̂i 'he has diarrhea'
koi kaa mà	to be pregnant
koi-kána	constipation
koi-nia	pregnant woman
koi-nyii gbeli	hookworm
koi-saa	barren woman
koi ta nina	newborn baby
koi-tɛ́ɛ	diarrhea
kolâ	rice bag
kole	white: kwii-kole 'white man'
kòmo	basket
konâ	mortar

kooŋ-keleŋ
airplane

kooŋ-sɛŋ sale
insecticide

kúraŋ
fence

kôya
long

kɔ́fe
coffee

kɔ́i
firewood

kɔlɛ
nearness, vicinity

kɔlɛ
sell

kɔlɛ
[illegible] in stool

kɔ́lɛ
sick

kɔlɛ a tɛ́i
have a chill

kɔli
iron, motor, machine

kɔli-ɣale-nuu
blacksmith

kɔ̂li
open mole

kɔli-dêŋa
screen

kɔlɔ
skin, book, paper, litter: kɔ́ɔ ŋá-kɔlɔ 'shoe', kɔlɔ-kpau 'pencil', kɔlɔ-laa 'sheet of paper', kɔlɔ-pɛrɛ 'schoolhouse', kɔlɔ siɣe 'sue in court', kɔlɔ pɔ̂yɛ-nuu 'clerk, secretary, writer'

kɔlɔ ɓó
to peel

kɔ̀lɔ-kɔlɔ
palover sauce

kɔlɔ-láa
page in a book

kɔlɔi a naa póno
to be recovered (was sick, now well)

kɔlɔi pónoɔ̂i
to be well

kɔlɔ-fela
illness

kɔlɔ-kole
bright

kɔlɔ-kúlaa
clean

kɔlɔ-pɛrɛ-nuu
student

kɔlɔ-wɔlɔ
scratch

-kɔna
throat

kɔni seɣe keleŋ
train

kɔlɔŋ
know, learn, find out

-kɔŋ
neck

kɔŋ
ŋa kɔŋ 'raise, bring up, rear'

kɔɔ
where

-kɔɔ
foot, leg: kɔɔ pîlanii 'beginning', kɔɔ-kwana 'ankle', kɔɔ-yee mɛi-pere 'on the left'

-kɔ́ɔ-gbua
toe

kɔɔ-ŋa kɔlɔ
shoes

kɔɔ-yée-mɛi-pere
(the) left

kɔ̃ɔŋ
moan

kɔ́ɔ̂ŋ
weigh

kɔ́paŋ
compound

kɔ̂pu
cup, tin can, rice measurement

kɔ́raŋ
year

kula
take out, come out, get out, surprise, come across: sukula 'explain', nɛnî kula 'marry a woman'

kúla sáa ma
after today

kúlɔ
sugar cane

kulu-lɔɔ
piassava wine

kúluŋ-ŋa
Kru

kuraté
small (Sanoyea)

kuro-te (dekpé)
little, small

kuruŋ
Kru

kuu-ŋa
crew, work party

kûyeŋ
potato

kûyeŋ-laa
potato greens

kwa-bo
brush (a fan)

kwa-sii-ɛɛ
brush

kwa-keleŋ
brushed farm

kwatara
old

kwɛ̂lɛɛ
bitterball

kwɛyɛ̂ŋ
necklace

kwí-tou
pineapple

kwíi
white person, European/American, educated person: kwíi-kole 'white man', kwíi-tɛɛ 'duck'

kwii-toli
coconut

kwii-zoo
doctor (M.D.)

kpâ-saa
head tie, scarf

kpaa (máŋ)
or

kpaa
no

kpála
dry

kpâlaŋ
farm, field

kpàlo
piassava palm branch

kpanâŋ
village

kpaɔ
bridge

kpao
no

kpâra
head-tie

kpasa
handkerchief

kpawɔ
fishhook

kpáwɔ
bridge

kpaya-kpaya
big, large

kpela
became physically mature (female)

kpele
drink, swallow, suck

kpeleŋ	yellow
kpeleŋ-kɛ̃ɛŋ	yellow fever
kpeli	earthworm
kpêli	remainder, rest, the other
kpene fa̋a-maa (kpono kelêŋ-maa)	malaria
kpera	stop, beg, ask: kpera yɛ̂ 'please, I beg of you'
kpete / kɔlɔ-kṹla	clean
kpeye	opposum
kpɛlɛɛ	name of the Kpelle tribe in Liberia: kpɛlɛɛ-nuu 'Kpelle man', kpɛlɛɛ-ŋa 'Kpelle people'
kpɛlɛɛ kêre	country kitchen
Kpɛlɛɛ-sale	country (traditional) medicine
kpɛlîŋ	shake, tremble
kpɛnɛ̂ŋ	mortar
kpɛtɛ	fix, make, create, grow, decide, get rich, circumcize
kpinâŋɔɔ	cooked
kpíni	night, darkness: kpíni sama 'midnight', kpiniseɣe 'nightgown'
kpíniŋ	wrap, fold, curl up
kpiniŋ	shady
kpîniŋ	region, neighborhood
-kpiŋ (Totota) kpɔ́ɔ (Gbanga)	-self
kpíri	bend
kpîri	load
kpiri-kɔlɔ	sandals
kpó-pɛrɛ	latrine
kpolo	salt
kpólo	bread
kpolo-nyɛ̃ɛ	smoked fish
-kpono	body, person, self: gbonôi 'through him, in his body'

kpòno
log (to sit on)

kpono-fãa-maa
have a fever

kpono kɛ́-maa ɓɔlɔ bôi
gain weight

kpono maa-pâa
camwood

kpóŋ
bottom of anything

kpôŋ
door

-kpóro
ankle

kpôwo
path

kpɔ́
very much: nɛ́ lɛ̀i kpɔ 'very good'

kpɔara
hate

kpɔ́ kpɔ
hammer, "knock-knock" (one says this word when arriving at a door: equivalent to knocking)

kpɔlɔ
underbrush, thick bush, shrub

kpɔ̂lɔ
basket

kpɔlu
red

kpɔlu
red, ripen, dye red, ripe, difficult: mɛni-kpɔlu 'trouble, difficulty'

kpɔmɔ
root, vine

kpɔŋ
crowd

kpɔŋ
help, gather, collect, pile up

kpɔ̃ɔ̂
harvested farm, young bush: a lí kpɔ̃ɔ̂i 'he went to farm'

-kpɔ́ɔ (Gbarŋa) } sâka
-kpiŋ (Totota) }
cut oneself

kpɔ́ŋ } wâna
kpiŋ }
hurt oneself

kpɔrɔŋ
rickets

kpua
short

-kpua
piece, section

-kpulôŋ
joints

kpuaa
short

kpune
whole, unbroken

kpûra
half, a part

L.

la
it (substitute for a + noun when the noun is not expressed) it (in commands when noun is expressed

-lá
mouth, opening, open top of a container, entrance, doorway, bank (of a stream), side of a surface (in English translated with prepositions by, at, next to)

láa
place, set, put, trust, lay, lie down

-láa
name

láa
leaf of plants: tóu-laa 'palm leaf', kɔlɔ-laa 'page of a book'

làa kêle
sweep

laa-kpaa
leap

láa-laâ
sloppy

láa mii-yée mɛi-pere
(the) right

laa-ŋunu
green

laa-see
last (prior)

laa-seγe / pὲlɛ-mɛi-sêγe
lapa

-láa-yá
spit

láâi
bed, sleeping place

laγi
shout

lâi
cold

laiɛ
cold

láo
soup (Liberian stew to eat with cooked ricɛ)

lé
what

-lee
mother (title of respect used with name for older person): pere-lee 'main road', pérɛ-lee 'head wife'

-léγa
hair, feathers

-lêγe
younger sibling

-leγe-nɛni
younger sister

-leγe-suroŋ
younger brother

leγi
pot, cooking pot: a leγi ŷilii 'she is cooking'

leɣi	pan, pot
leɣi-ɣili-kɔli	stone
léŋ	how?
-leŋei	waist
lɛ́	show, appoint, teach: sɛŋ lɛ-nuu 'teacher'
lɛ́lɛ	grow, develop
lɛ́lɛ	good, nice, fine, beautiful
lɛ́lɛɛ aŋanaa	beautiful
lɛ̀ni-maa	now
lɛ̂wo	breathe, breath
lí	go, take with
-lîa	older sibling: ńîa-surɔŋ 'my older brother, ńîa-nɛni 'my older sister'
lia	to forget
li ɓi	dirty
-líi	liver (center of emotion): lii-sɛleŋ 'worry, anxiety', ńíi nɛɛ̂i 'I'm happy', ńíi ŋwânaai 'I'm angry', lii-laa 'satisfaction', lii-maa-waa 'pure in heart', lii-kpele 'courage, patience, boldness', lii-see 'peace', líi-ma-sɛŋ 'treasure, favorite'
líi	raffia palm
lii ma sɛŋ	choice
lii-nɛɛ	happy
lii wana	vexed, angry
-lii / -woni (Gbarŋa)	liver
lii tóoɔ pólu (Káa yaôi)	afraid
líyeŋ	sweet, savory
loa	hoe
loai	between, the area in between
loai ma	area in between, border
lôkuro	baby, small child

lôloŋ
child: Pl. nỉa pɛlɛɛ 'children'

lóma
red deer, antelope

lômpo
room

-lônii
children: pl. of lóŋ: kalilonii 'members of the snake society'

lonii ma
right away, soon

lóno
speak, count: kɔlɔ lóno 'read a book'

-lóŋ
child

looŋ
squirrel

lɔ́
enter, put

Lɔɓa-pɔ / vái lɔii
Robertsport

lɔɓa wúra (mãaŋ wúru)
rubber tree

lɔɓa yá (mãaŋ gá)
sap, latex

lɔku ~ lɔ́ɔ-kuu
week

lɔii
land, floor, earth, ground, soil: lɔii-mɛni 'tribal, customary matter

lɔii pelee
turn the soil, till

lɔ́ɔlu
five

lɔɔ
forest, bush, jungle

lúu
mist, fog, dew

-luu à naa seɣe
scab

M.

-mà
on, surface of a thing

ma kanâŋ / saa
carve

maa-fela-laa
set a bone: from máa-fela "change"

maa koli
fence in, enclose

maa kɔri
study

maa-nɛɛ̂i
it is advisable, one should

maâ-tinaŋɔ
late

maamu
spouse

máki
vaccination

mãla
dance

-mâleŋ
nephew

mãleŋ / mãleŋ-nɛni
nephew / niece

mánaa
over there

manaai
August

manaŋ
cassava

manaŋ-laa
cassava greens

manaŋ-sîaa
pounded-cassava, ready to use

mánɔ
Mano

máŋ
also, too

maŋuŋ
mango

-marê
question (in phrase only): màrê kɛ́ 'ask him a question', mare-kɛɛ kɛ́ 'ask a question'

marê-kɛ́
ask a question

mèla
strip

-mɛi
above, the area above another thing

mɛni
matter, thing, business, palaver

mɛni
hear, obey

mɛni-kpɔlu
danger

mɛni-kpɔlu à ŋanaa
dangerous

Mɛniŋ
Mandingo

mɛsɛ
sesame seed: Also ɓɛsɛ

mí	where
mii	eat
miliŋ	trouser leg
mina	spoon
m̀m̀ ɔr ḿḿ	yes (used as a response to greetings or to indicate you are listening)
mɔ̃-nyii	measles
Mɔ̃a	Mano
mɔlɔŋ ɣala	rice straw
mɔlɔŋ	rice (uncooked): mɔlɔŋ-kao 'rice seed'
mɔlɔŋ kao	rice seed
mɔlɔŋ kɛ̃ɛŋ	seed rice
mɔlɔŋ kêre	granary, rice kitchen
mɔlɔŋ kpala	upland rice
mɔlɔŋ mɔŋɔɔ	sprouted rice
mɔlɔŋ sia-pɛ́rɛ lá	rice mill
mɔlɔŋ-tée tãi	rice harvest (season)
Mɔne	Monday
mɔ́ɔ	red, ripe
-mù	under, the area under something
mua	boil, sore
muluŋ	dust
múluŋ / muluŋ-kpolo	dust
muluŋ-pɔrɔ	soil dust
mu-seɣe	tall
mu-tɛi-ɛɛ	blue

N.

naa
there

-nâo ~ nawe
friend (also used to address a social equal or acquaintance)

-nana
vein

nâŋ
father, father's brother (also used to address an older person to show respect)

nâŋ ŋɔnâŋ
grandfather

nâŋ ŋɔsaa-ɓɔɔlɔ / ńee ŋɔ̀ǹee
aunt, grandmother

naŋîŋ
skip over, step over, take over, overlook

nei
after a while, later

neɣeŋ
face

nêre
nail

nɛɛ
delicious, sweet, good tasting, happy

nɛ́i
dime, ten cents

ǹɛ́lɛɛ agɛ́ɛ ifé nia ma
it's important not to forget

nɛ́mu
breathe

nɛnɛ with ŋá
comfort, console

nênɛ
which?

nɛnî
woman, wife: Pl. nɛyâa 'women'

nɛni ma yɛkɛ
dress

-ŋɛ́ŋ
tongue

nɛŋ
boil: yá nɛŋɔɔ 'boiled water'

-ni
(to indicate plural for few irregular nouns)

nia
forget

-nîa
older sibling: ńîa-suɣɔŋ 'my older brother', ńîa-nɛni 'my older sister'

nîa
will, desire

nîa-pɛlɛɛ
children, pl. of lôloŋ 'child'

niɣɛ-liɣɛi
June

nìi
(used with à as a dialect variation for à kɛ̀) "if..."

niî	yet, still
nina	new
ninai	next (as in next day)
nini	shade
ninîŋ	shadow, shade
niŋa	cow: niŋa ŋini-ya 'milk'
nɔ	only, just
nɔ́mu	stay (awhile)
nɔ̃́ɔ	dirt
núu-tɛi-kwii zoo	black bagger
nuu pɔlɔ-ŋa	ancestors, elders
núu-ɓelaa	operate
nûa	men, people: Pl. of núu
núu	man, person: núu-kpune 'human being'
nuu-kole	Peace Corps Volunteer
nweei	October
nỳá mɔlɔŋ	swamp rice
nyàle	cat
nyɛɛ ~ nyɛ̃ɛ	fish
nyɛ̃ɛ dɛnɛ̂ŋ kpɛ́tɛɛ	stock a fish pond
nyɛ̃ɛ kolaŋ	fish pond
nyɛ̃ɛ-kpala	dried fish
Nyɛŋ-yeŋ	February
nyiɛ	groan
nyii	sleep
-nyíŋ	tooth
nyíŋi	this
nyítí	that
nyɔ́mɔɔ	bad, ugly
nyɔ́ɔ	bad: (contr. of nyɔ́mɔɔ)
nyɔ̀ɔ	be afraid
nyɔ̂ɔ	within the year
nyûo-la	mother-in-law

ŋ

-ŋa
(to pluralize nouns):
gbɛlɛɛ-ŋa 'the Kpelle people

ŋá
on top of, top area of a
thing

ŋãa
contraction of ŋãma
blood (only contracted form
used)

ŋaa-ɓo
wake up

ŋáaŋ
four

ŋâli
sharpen (a knife)

ŋanaa
a lot, much

ŋanûa
my family

ŋaŋ
then

ŋela
rabbit

ŋêleŋ ~ ɣêleŋ
fry

-ŋɛ́i
eyes, face, appearance

ŋɛi-kɛ mɔ-mɔ̀
smile

ŋɛ̆ya
sand

ŋí
this

ŋíni
breast

ŋɔni
bird

ŋɔni kpɛ̂ɛ
to scare away birds

ŋɔ́nɔ
again

ŋɔŋ
fire

ŋɔŋ-teŋâ
fireplace

ŋɔ̃́ya
guest, visitor, stranger

ŋɔsoo-kɔli
motor bike

ŋúme
knee

ŋuŋ
hundred

-ŋuŋ
head, chapter in a book

ŋúŋ
awaken, wake up

-ŋuŋ-leya
hair (head)

ŋuŋ tɔnɔ
100

ŋuŋ tûɛ-pere
above

ŋuŋ-soli
cold (fresh cold)

ŋwána
bitter: ŋwana-lɔɔ-nuu 'a
violent, wicked person',
lii- wana 'anger'

ŋweei
name of the month of October
(named after the call of the
bird kpála ŋɔni that returns
at this month)

O.

owêi	yes

P.

pá	come, bring
paa	paa kɛ́e núu (body part) na. sore, hurt sore (body part)
pâi	pint
pala	weave
pala	sore
pâma-sii	paramount chief
panâŋ ma	yard
pâne	pan: pâne-kalaŋ 'corrugated iron for roofing'
pâŋ	4 unit: pâŋ tɔnɔ - $4 usage confined nowadays to the older generation
pâra	swamp: pâra-mɔlɔŋ 'swamp rice'
pàra-ŋa sêɣe (paa-ŋa hɛŋ)	bandage
pâu	pound (measurement)
pèle	game, entertainment
peleŋ	straight
pene	turn, stir, change
pere	way, road, path
pɛlɛ	start, begin, bend over, bend down
pɛ́lɛ	also, besides (in phrase: é pɛ́lɛ...ma)
pɛ̀lɛ	small: pɛ̀lɛ̄-pɛlɛɛ 'small', ŋanîa-pɛlɛɛi 'my children'
pɛ̂mɛlɛŋ-kau	star
pɛ́rɛ	house, hut, building
pɛ́rɛ-kpɛ̃ya	thatch roof
pɛrɛ-laa-lei	house, enhance
-pɛ̃rɛ	side (of one's body)
pii	porcupine
pîlaŋ	get down, descend, put down, follow
pîleti	plate
pili	broadcast (rice)

poa
fruit, flower

póa
lake, pond

-pôlu
bac of body, back

pôlu-pere
backwards

pomo
carry on the back

pono
clear, light-colored, fair

pɔkɔ̂ŋ
picture, image, copy, imitate

pɔlɔ
old, to get old: siɛ-pɔlɔ 'old man'

pɔlɔi
last (as in last month)

pɔ̃lɔ
spin

pɔ́lɔŋ
tribal initiation school

pɔ̃ɔlɔ
to spindle

pɔmûŋ
sprout, germinate

pɔŋ
fell (a tree), cut down, chop

-pɔ̂ŋ
spouse

pɔ́ɔ
to own

-pɔɔ
dependent noun
ownership: mine, yours, his
equivalent to possessive pronoun in English.
use with à

pɔri
can, is able to, ability (to do something)

pôrɔ
soil, dirt, topsoil, clay, mud

pôrɔŋ
inside of a house

pɔrɔŋ-bɔi
house boy

pɔ̃yɛ
write, mark: kɔlɔ pɔ̃yɛ-nuu 'writer, clerk, secretary'
design, color

pɔ̃yɛ maa fáleŋ
dye

pɔ̃yɛ pú ma
embroider

pú
pour, run away, empty out

-púlu
intestines

pumu
ant

puru
hunger: puru káa mâ 'I'm hungry'

puu
ten

S.

saa
    die, hew, carve

sâa
    today

sã́a
    straight, honest, just

sã̂a
    things: pl. of sɛŋ

saa ɓa
    three

sáa γele ŋi
    this day

-sâaɓɔlɔ
    one's sibling of the opposite sex, i.e. a man's sister

sàγe
    a dwarf antelope (the wise animal of the Kpelle folk tales)

saγílaŋ
    needle: saγílaŋ síγe 'get an injection

saγilaŋ-tέε
    give an injection

sâla
    sacrifice: sâla kula 'make a sacrifice

Salaide
    Saturday

sale
    medicine

sale-kau
    tablet, pill

sale-kpele
    liquid medicine

sále-pɛrɛ
    hospital

sale-pέrɛ kέtɛ
    hospital

sale-pέrɛ loŋ
    clinic

sale-tii-kɛ-núu
    pharmacist

sama
    gift, to give a gift:
    sama-sɛŋ 'gift, present'

sáma
    space in between or among objects, waist, middle, center

samâ-ya γele
    rainy season

same
    root

samu
    turtle

sane
    bottle

sáŋ
    parable, proverb

saŋûla
    calf and skin (of the leg)

see
    sit, sit down, place, set

-seêi
    a place to sit

séγai
    coast, coastal area, coastwards

seɣe
clothes

seɣe-nina
new cloth

seɣe-sɔlɔ-nuu
tailor

seɣe yée-koya
sleeve (long)

séɣeŋ
clear up, melt

sele
elephant

sêleŋ
shilling (used to be worth
20 cents)

seri
arrive, come (as in time
comes), reach

sêɓɛ
talisman, medicine container
(hung around a child's neck to
protect)

sɛɣɛ̂
thanks: sɛɣɛ̂ fe 'give thanks',
ísɛɣɛ̂ 'thank you'

sɛ̂lɛŋ
hang up: lii-sɛlɛŋ 'worry'

Sɛloŋ
Sierra Leone

sɛŋ
thing: pl. sãâ 'things', mii-sɛŋ 'food'

sɛŋ-fólo
dishes

sɛŋ-kau
money, change

sɛŋ-kau sɔlɔ-ɓoɔ
earn money

sɛŋ-kau kɔi keleŋ
taxi

sɛŋ-lé-nuu
teacher

sɛ́rɛ
shake hands, snap fingers

sí
plant: kwaa sí 'plant
rice'

sia
walk, rub, beat: kili-ŋa-sia 'to think', sia-sia
'walk about, stroll',
kéleŋ sía 'drive a car'

sîa
argument

si-sɛŋ
plant, sapling

si-sɛŋ ɓá (kúlaa)
pod

si-yá
porch

síɛ
chair

siɛ-pɔlɔ
old man

síɣaŋ
borrow, rent

siɣe
pick up, take, carry, take hold, lift, move from

-sîi
kind, type, variety, tribe

sĩi
spider

sii-sɛŋ gbiŋ
hill

sii-sɛŋ mɔ́ɔ
sprouted seed

si-sɛŋ mɔ́ŋ
seedling

si-sɛŋ si kôlaŋ
garden

sii-sɛŋ si tãi (ɣele)
planting time (season)

sina
termite, bug-a-bug

sinâa
men: pl. of surɔ̂ŋ

sîŋ
shore

siŋ
deep

siŋ
dig

sìŋaŋ
iroko or mulberry tree

soɓoɔ
early

sóli
hurt, ache

somôi
early

sómu
go early, go right away

sonia
wives of a polygamous man

soŋ
catch, arrest

sôŋo
corner

soo
horse: soo-kɔli 'bicycle', soo-faleŋ 'camel', wɛlɛ-soo 'donkey'

sóo
funnel

sɔ̂ɓele
shovel

sɔ́ɓɔ
groundhog

sɔ́lɔ
sew

sɔlɔ with ɓó
get receive

Sɔne
Sunday

-sɔŋ
deed, action, behavior, guilt

sɔɔ
pipe vine

sɔɔ
daub, hurt, injure, hit

sɔ̂ɔ
anteater

sɔ̆ɔ - sɔɔŋ
price, value

sɔ́ɔŋ
lock (on a door)

sɔ̀ɔŋ-kɛtɛi
expensive

sɔ́ya
rice bird, weaver bird

-su
inside, in, area inside of a place or object

su-kpanâŋɔɔ
strong

sua
animal, meat

sûa
garden

-sṹa
nose

sua kpálaa
dry meat

-sṹa yá pú
runny nose

súɓɛlɛ
yam-like tuber

súlɔi
first

sulûŋ
waterfall

Sune
Sunday

sûŋ
fast

surɔ̂ŋ
man, husband, male:
surɔŋ-loo 'small boy'

surɔ̂ŋ ⎫ pɔlɔ
nɛni ⎭
umbilical cord

T.

ta	some, any
taa	town, village
taa-tulɛ-kpo	manure, fertilizer
táaŋ	one (used only in counting) Also: táɣaŋ
taaŋ-kpala	tobacco
tâɓa	towel
tãi	time
táma	to be much, plentiful
támaa	much, many, plenty
tâpi kɛ́-núu	rubber-tapper
tâpia kɔli	unburned brush
tâpiŋ-kɛ́ɛ	tap (a rubber tree)
téa	pumpkin, squash
tée	harvest, cut
tèeɓele	table
Tɛide	Thursday
tela	also, before
telâŋ	peanuts, groundnuts
teŋá	coal
têya	pump
tɛ́	go up, climb, rise, raise, lift, close
tɛɛ	pass by, send, give, surpass: ŋáloŋ tɛ̀ɛ tí 'last month'
tɛ́ɛ	chicken: kwii-tɛɛ 'duck'
tɛ́ɛ	blow
tɛɛ kɛ́ɛ é zaa	hatch an egg
tɛ́ɛ-pérɛ	chicken coop
Tɛɣɛide	Thursday
tɛi	blacken
tɛi-tɛi	one by one, several, a few
tɛi-tɛ̂i / tɔnɔ-tɔnɔ	once, one at a time
tí	that

tiaŋ	load
tíi	work, farm
tii-keleŋ	burn the farm
tii keleŋ tâi	burning time
tíi-kɛ́-nuu	farmer
tiiŋ	charcoal
tiɣi	charcoal
tina or tuna	rain
tínaa	tomorrow
tinaa maa	spin
tínaŋ	turn around, surround, delay
tíniŋ	silent
tíŋ	noise, sound
tisô	sneeze
tĩya	taboo
tíyeŋ	cross (a river), go across
tóli	call
tólo	jealousy: tólo kúla 'be jealous'
tòloŋ	pigeon, dove
-tôŋ	top (of a surface)
toŋo	guinea fowl
too	fall, fell, put on, dress, shine
tóu	palmnut
tɔ̃a	Loma
tɔ̂kɔ	young (note: this word has a wide range of meanings: fruits not yet ripe, food that is cooking, but which is not yet cooked, etc.)
tɔ̃lɛ̂	cough: ŋaa-tɔ̃lɛ 'T.B.', zu-koo-tɔ̃lɛ 'whooping cough'
tɔlî	palm kernel
tɔnɔ	one
tɔ̂ŋ	law

tɔ̀ŋ
quietness, silence

tɔ̂ɔ
bean

tɔɔ
build, stand up, being rich, raise, breed

tɔɔ
wait, stop

tɔɔ-sɛŋ (ʔɔɔ̂)
rash

tɔɔŋ
beans

tɔ̃ɔŋ
cough

tɔ̃ɔŋ saa
produce a cough

tûa
spend a long time, behave: tùa-pere 'behavior, custom'

tua
scratch, bruise

túa
king monkey

tûaŋ
push, move over

-tűɛ
front of, front area of somebody or a thing

Tuide
Tuesday

tûlɛ
(in compounds): taa-tulɛ 'domestic animals'

tulê
kola nut, cola

túluŋ
garbage pile

tuma
fishing net

túma
net

tuma-laa
greens, herb, vegetables

-tűme
heel (on the foot)

túmo
shake, deceive, fool

túmu
cassava snake

túna
rain

tuŋ
news

V.

vã̂a
greeting: vầa kɛ́ 'greet someone (by snapping fingers)'

Vái
Vai

vólo màa-làai
afternoon (see fólo)

vólo aâ kúla
sun up

vólo aâ nyii see
morning

vóloi à kúla
east

vóloi à yeŋ
west

vɔ̀lɔ
black snake

Vɔ̃ŋ-sɛŋ-ma
Voinjoma

vuu-laɣii
March

W.

waa
wash

wâa (wáwa)
broom

waa gâla
bath house

wála
thousand

Wêide
Wednesday

wẽne
window

wɛɛ
yesterday

wɛɛ fólo pôlu ma
day before yesterday

Wɛ̂ɛde
Wednesday

wɛ́li
want, wish, like, love: wɛli-kɛ-maa 'love'

wiɛ
heavy

wôɓe
urine

wóla
savannah

-wʊ́li
ear

woli-kwɛyɛ̀ŋ
earring

wóloŋ
sour

-wóo
word, voice, sound, language, noise, speech: wóo-kɛ-sɛŋ 'letter', wóo-ɣɛli 'sentence', wóo-kpua 'syllable'

wɔ́lɔ
cry

wɔlɔ-saa zu
sob

wɔlɔ- wɔlɔ
a long time ago

wúma-nuu
rogue

wúlɔ
palm oil, oil, fat, grease

wûnu
new (things or people who are new to a place)

wúru
tree, stick

wuru-ɓa
fruit

wuru-ɓa-kao
fruit salad

wúru-kau
stick

wúru-kɔlɔ
bark

wúru-pɔŋɔɔ
logs, cut trees

wúru-tíi-kɛ́-nuu
carpenter

Y.

yá
buy

yá
river, creek

yá nyá tɛ́i
well

yaba
onion

yata-laa
water green

ye bu gie ma
multiply

ye gbiniŋ ma
weave

ye lɛɛ laai
stay in bed

ye nɛmu a zu-wiɛɛ
breathe deeply

yee
thread

-yée
hand

yée
hill

-yee-gbua
finger

yée-kɛtɛ
mountain

yée-kɔŋ
muscle

yɛɛ
say (used always with a pronoun prefixed)

yêkɛ
    shirt

yifa
    pocket

yɔɔ̂
    wet

yuɔ̂ɔ
    axe

yúo
    ocean. Atlantic Ocean, lake: yuo-ŋa 'American'

Z.

zeɣe zu
    choose

ziɛ
    ceiling mat

ziɛ̂i
    ceiling

zoo
    medical man, traditional doctor

zɔ́lɔ
    sew

Zɔzɔ
    Zorzor

zu-kpalaŋɔɔ
    strong, manly

zu-saa
    lazy

Zûɛdu
    Zwedru

DICTIONARY (ENGLISH - KPELLE) ....above to arm

A.

above
    ŋuŋ tûɛ-pere

above, the area above another thing
    -mɛi

action
    -sɔŋ

add
    ɓu gie ma

it is advisable, one should
    maa-nɛɛ̂i

afraid
    lii tóoɔ pólu
    káa yaôi

to be afraid
    nyɔ̀ɔ

after today
    kúla sáa ma

afternoon
    fɔ̂lo tɛ́-ɛɛi ŋ̀uŋ ma
    vɔ́lo màa-làai

again
    ŋɔ́nɔ

airplane
    kooŋ-keleŋ

alive
    fulu

all
    kélee

almost
    gbâa

also
    bò
    èbò
    gɛ́ ɓò

also, too
    máŋ

also, before
    tela

also, besides
    pɛ́lɛ
    (in phrase - é pɛ́lɛ...ma)

American
    yúo-ŋá

ancestors, elders
    nuu pɔlɔ-ŋa

and
    da

and also
    kɛ́ ɓò

anger
    lii-ŋwana
    nii wanaai - I'm angry

animal meat
    sua

ankle
    -kpóro
    kɔɔ-kwana

answer
    fáa

ant
    pumu

anteater
    sɔ̂ɔ

April
    Dɛ́niŋ

argument
    sîa

arm
    ɓooŋ (variant)

armpit
ɓooŋ wolo (variant)

arrive, come (as in 'time comes')
reach
seri

ask, beg
kpera

ask a question
marê-kɛ́

at
-lá

August
Manaai

aunt, grandmother
nǎŋ ŋɔ̀saa-ɓɔɔlɔ
née ŋɔ̀ǹee

awaken, wake up
ŋúŋ

axe
yuɔ̂ɔ

B

baby, small child
lôkuro

newborn baby
koi ta nina

back
pôlu

back of body
-pôlu

backwards
pôlu-pere

bad, ugly
nyɔ́mɔɔ
nyɔ́ɔ (contraction of nyɔ́mɔɔ)

bag
bɔrɔ
kolâ - rice bag

banana
gôi
gwêi

bandage
pâra-ŋa seɣe
paa-ŋa hɛŋ

Bandi
gbâni

bark (of tree)
wúru-kɔlɔ

barren woman
koi-saa

basket
kômo
kpɔ̂lɔ

Bassa
gbôlo

bath house
waa gâla

be
kɛ́

bean
tɔ̂ɔ
tɔɔŋ - beans

bear fruit
ɓá

beautiful
lɛ́lɛ
lɛ́lɛ aŋanaa

bed
gbìŋ

bed, sleeping place
laâi

beer
bia

beg
kpera

begin
pɛlɛ

beginning
kɔ́ɔ pîlanii

behave
tûa

behavior
-sɔŋ

bend
kpíri

bend over
pɛlɛ

between, the area in between
-loai

space in between or among objects;
waist, middle, center
-sáma

bicycle
soo-kɔli

big, important
kɛ́tɛ

big, large
kpaya-kpaya

bitter
ŋwána
ŋwana-lɔɔ-nuu - a violent, wicked person

bitterball
kwɛ̂lɛɛ

bird
ŋɔni

black bagger
nuu-tɛi-kwii zoo

black deer
ɓɛɛla

blacksmith
kɔli-ɣale-nuu

black snake
vɔ̀lɔ

blacken, black
tɛi

blood (only contracted form is used)
ŋãa (contraction of ŋãma)

blow
tɛ́ɛ

blue
mu-tɛi-ɛɛ

boat
kéleŋ

body, person, self
-kpono

to boil
nɛ́ŋ
yá nɛŋɔɔ - boiled water

boil, sore
mua

boldness
lii-kpele

Bong County
Gbɛlɛɛ lɔii

Bong River
ɓoŋ yeei ma

book
kɔlɔ

bone
-kau

bone setter
gau-see
gie-ŋa

border
loai ma

borrow, rent
síɣaŋ

both of them
di feerɛ

bottle
sane

bottom (of anything)
kpóŋ

box
gãla

bracelet
bora-ɣale

brass
bara

bread
kpólo

break
ɣale

breast
-ŋíni

breathe, breath
lɛ̂wo

breathe
nɛ́mu
ye nɛ́mu a zu-wiɛɛ - breathe deeply

breed
tɔɔ

bridge
kpaɔ
kpáwɔ

bright
kɔlɔ-kole

bring
pá

broadcast (rice)
pili

broken
ɣalɛɛ

broom
wâa
wáwa

brush
kwa-sii-ɛɛ

brush (a farm)
kwa-bo

Buchanan
Bikâna

bucket
bɔ̂ki

build, stand up, to be rich, raise, breed
tɔɔ

bunch, bundle
ɣiri

burn
kéreŋ

burn (the farm)
tii-kereŋ

burning time
tii kereŋ tăi

business
mɛni

bush
lɔɔ

bush dog
bàla

buy
yá

by
-lá

C

calf and shin (of the leg)
-saŋûla

call
tóli

camel
soo-faleŋ

camwood
kpono maa-pâa

can, is able to; ability (to do something)
pɔri

canoe
kéleŋ

car
kéleŋ

carpenter
wúru-tíi-kɛ́ɛ-nuu

carry
siɣe

carry (on the back)
pomo

carve
ma kanâŋ
saa

cassava
manaŋ

cassava greens
manaŋ-laa

pounded cassava (ready to use)
manaŋ-síaa

cassava snake
túmu

cat
nyàle

catch, arrest
soŋ

ceiling
ziȇ

ceiling mat
ziɛ

center
-sama

chair
síɛ
see-seŋ

chair, bench
bɛŋ
bɛlɛŋ

to change
maa-fela

chapter in a book
ŋuŋ

charcoal
tiiŋ
tiɣi

chicken
tɛ́ɛ

chicken coop
tɛ́ɛ-pɛ́rɛ

chief, king
kâloŋ

chiefdom
kâloŋ-laa

child
lóŋ
lôloŋ

children
lônii (pl. of ló)
nîa-pɛlɛɛ (pl. of lôlo)

choice
ʔii ma sɛŋ

choose
zeɣe zu

church
ɣâla-pɛrɛ

circumcize
kpɛtɛ

clay
pɔ̂rɔ

to clean
kpete
kɔlɔ-kùla

clean
kɔlɔ-kúlaa

clean up, melt
séɣeŋ

clear, light-colored, fair
pono

climb
tɛ́

clinic
sale-pɛ́rɛ loŋ

to close
tɛ́

clothes
seɣe

cloud
ɣele-kɔlɔŋ

coal
téŋa

coast
séɣai

cocoa tree
kaaka wúru

coconut
kwii-toli

coffee
kɔ́fe

cold
lâi
laiɛ

cold (fresh cold)
ŋuŋ-soli

cold in stool
kɔlɛ

color
bɔ̃yɛɛ

come
pá

come (time comes)
seri

come loose, loosen
fúloŋ

come out
kula

comfort, console
nɛɲɛ (with ɲ́a)

compound
kɔ́paŋ

constipation
koi-kána

cook
ɣîli
a leɣi ɣîlii - she is cooking

cook shop
ɣíli-pɛrɛ

cooked rice
ɓa

copy
pɔkɔ̂ŋ

corn
gbai

corner
sôŋo

corrugated roofing
pâne-kalaŋ

to cough
tɔ̃ɔŋ
tɔ̃ɔŋ saa - produce a cough

cough
tɔ̃lɛ̂

country kitchen
kpɛlɛɛ kêre

country (traditional) medicine
kpɛlɛɛ-sale

courage, patience, boldness
lii-kpele

cow
ɲiŋa

crab
geêŋ

create
kpɛtɛ

crew, work party
kuu-ŋa

crooked
kpinâŋɔɔ

to cross (a river), go across
    tíyɛŋ

crowd
    kpɔŋ

cry
    wɔ́lɔ

cup, tin can, rice measurement
    kɔ̂pu

to cure, to heal
    ɓálo

curl up
    kpíniŋ

custom, behavior
    tûa-pere

cut, tear
    fála

cut down
    pɔŋ

cut oneself
    pronoun + -kpɔ́ɔ sâka
                (Gbarnga)
    "   -kpiŋ sàka
                (Totota)

cutlass
    gbêɣa

D

dance
    mãla

danger
    mɛni-kpɔlu

dangerous
    mɛni-kpɔlu à ŋanaa

daub, hurt, injure, hit
    sɔɔ

day, sun
    fólo

day
    ɣelɛ

day after tomorrow
    fê yani

day before yesterday
    wɛɛ fólo pôlu ma

___ days ago
    fólo a tɛ́ɛ

dead
    káa búma

deceive
    túmo

December
    Gɔlɛ-ɣaloŋ-loŋ

decide
    kpɛtɛ

deed, action, behavior, guilt
    -sɔŋ

deep
    siŋ

to delay
    tínaŋ

delicious, sweet, good tasting, happy
nεε

design, color
pɔ̃yε

dew
lúu

diarrhea
koi-tέε
gol a tεεi - he has diarrhea

difficult
kpɔlu

difficulty
mεni-kpɔlu

dig
siŋ

digger
dikâ

dime, ten cents
nέi

dirt
nɔ̃́ɔ

dirty
liɓi

dishes
sεŋ-fólo

disobey
ɓàa-kúla-maa

do, be, happen, say
kέ
da kε̂ mà - they call it...

doctor, nurse, medical person
dàa-daa

doctor
kέlεŋ-sia-nuu

doctor (M.D.)
gὲ-zu-feerε kwii zoo
kwíi zoo

dog
ɣîla

dollar
dâla

domestic animals
taa-tulε

domesticated (in compounds)
tûlε

donkey
wεlε-soo

door
kpôŋ

dozen
dɔ̂siŋ

dress
nεni ma yεkε

to dress
too

drink, swallow, suck
kpele

drive (a car)
kêleŋ sia

driver
kéleŋ-sia-nuu

dry
kpála

dry season
fólo-laa ɓo ɣele

duck
kwii-tεε

dust, soil dust
múluŋ
muluŋ-kpolo
muluŋ-pɔrɔ

dwarf antelope (the wise animal of the Kpelle folk tales)
sàɣe

dye
pɔ̃yɛ ma fáleŋ

to be dying
káa saâi

E

each other
kîe

ear
-wóli

early
somôi
soɓ̂oɔ

earn money
sɛŋ-kau
sɔlɔ-ɓoɔ

earring
woli-kwɛyɛ̂ŋ

earth
lɔii

earthworm
kpeli

east
vóloi à kúla

eat
mii

eddoes
gbûnɔɓ̂ele

eggplant
ɓúlɔ-kwɛlɛɛ

elephant
sele

embroider
pɔ̃yɛ pú ma

empty, vacant
fólo

enter, put
lɔ́

European, American (n.)
kwíi-kole

European, American (adj.)
kwíi

evening
ɣele-wu
ɣele-lii

excuse me (to one person)
kafâlo

excuse me (to several people)
ka kafalo

explain
su-kula

expensive
sɔ̀ɔŋ-kɛtɛi

eyes, face, appearance
-ŋɛ́i

F

face
neɣeŋ

fall, fell, put on, dress, shine
too

my family
ŋanua

to fan (rice)
fɛ̂ɛ

farm, field
kpâlaŋ

brushed farm
kwa-keleŋ

farmer
tií-kɛ́-nuu

fast (adj.)
félaa

to be fast
maa féla

fast (n.)
sûŋ

fat
gbene kɛ́tɛ
ɣbune kɛ́tɛ

father, father's brother (also used to address an older person respectfully)
nâŋ

father-in-law
ɓɔɔ̂ lɔ

February
Nyɛŋ-yeŋ

feces
kaâŋ-kau

fell (a tree), cut down, chop
pɔŋ

fellowmate, peer, friend
-barâŋ
-barâa - pl.

fence
gâla
kóraŋ

to fence in, enclose
maa koli

to have a fever
kpono-fãa-maa

finger
-yee-gbua

field (already burned)
fɛ̃ŋ-kpala

fire
ŋɔŋ

fireplace
ŋɔŋ-teŋâ

firewood
kɔ́i

first
fîle
fúlɔi
súlɔi

fish
nyɛɛ
nyɛ̃ɛ

dried fish
nyɛ̃ɛ-kpala

smoked fish
kpolo-nyɛ̃ɛ

fishhook
kpawɔ

fish pond
nyɛ̃ɛ kȏlaŋ

fishing net
tuma

five
lɔ́ɔlu

five cents
foŋ

fix, make, create, grow, decide, get rich, circumcize
kpɛtɛ

floor
lɔii

fog
lȗu

to fold
kpíniŋ

follow
pîlaŋ

food
mii-sɛŋ

to fool
tȗmo

foot, leg
-kɔ́ɔ

for
à

forest, bush, jungle
lɔɔ

forget
nia

it's important not to forget
ǹέlεε a gεε ifé nia ma

four
ŋáaŋ

four (unit)
pâŋ
pâŋ tɔnɔ - four dollars

Friday
Felaide

friend (also used to address a social equal or acquaintance)
-nâo
nawe

friend
-barâŋ
-barâa - pl.

front of, front area of somebody or a thing
-túε

fruit, flower
poa

fruit
wuru-ɓa

fruit seed
wuru-ɓa-kao

fry
ŋèleŋ
ɣèleŋ

funnel
sóo

G

gain weight
kpono kέ-maa sɔlɔ ɓôi

game, entertainment
pêle

Ganta
Gaŋ-taa

gallon
gâloŋ

garbage pile
túluŋ

garden
sûa
si-sεŋ si kôlaŋ

get down, descend, put down, follow
pîlaŋ

get, receive
sɔlɔ (with ɓó)

get out
kula

to be getting better
a kέ ɓalo

to gift, to give a gift
sama

gift, present
sama-sεŋ

Gio
gîo

Gissi
gîsi-ŋa

to give birth
fȕloŋ
maa e fȕloŋ- she gave birth

go early, go right away
sómu

go, take with
lí

go up, climb, rise, raise, lift,
close
tɛ́

goat
ɓoli

Gola
gôla

gold
goru

good, nice, fine, beautiful
lɛ́lɛ

gourd
gbɛkɛ̂ɛ

gourd, calabash
gònoŋ

grandfather
nâŋ
ŋɔ̀naŋ - his grandfather

grandmother
nâŋ ŋɔ̀saa-bɔɔlɔ
ńee ŋɔ̀ńee - his grandmother

grainery, rice kitchen
mɓlɔŋ kêre

grapefruit
gamɛ́nɛ kpaya-kpaya

grass, weed, trash, chaff, peeling
scale (of fish)
kala

grasshopper, locust
gotó

grave
ɓolûŋ

Grebo
gileɓo

green (color)
laa-ŋunu

green, unripe
gbolô

greens, herb, vegetable
tuma-laa

potato greens
kûyeŋ-laa

a type of water green
gbɔ̂-laa

greeting
vâa kɛ́

to greet someone (by snapping fingers)
vâa

groan
nyiɛ

ground
lɔii

groundhog
sɔ́ɓɔ

grow
ɓɔɔlɔ
kpɛtɛ

grow, develop
lɛ́lɛ

guest, visitor, stranger
ŋɔ́ya

guilt
-sɔŋ

Guinea
    Gìini

guinea fowl
    toŋo

H

hair feathers
    -léɣa

hair (head)
    -ŋuŋ-leɣa

half, a part
    kpûra

one-half
    gbôra
    gbûra

hammer, "knock-knock" (said when arriving at a person's door)
    kpɔ́ kpɔ

hard
    yée

handbag
    gbóŋ-toloŋ

handkerchief
    kpasa

hand over, give
    fé

hang up
    sɛ̂lɛŋ

happen
    kɛ́

happy
    lii-nɛɛ
    nɛɛ
    nìi nɛɛ̂i - I'm happy

Harbel
    Àbɛ

rice harvest (season)
    mɔlɔŋ-tée tăi

to harvest, cut
    tée

harvest farm, young bush
    kpɔ̃ɔ̂
    a li kpɔ̃ɔ̂i - he went to farm

haste
    kirɛ

hatch an egg
    tɛɛ .kɛ́ɛ é zaa

hat, helmet
    gbaɓɛ́lɛ

hat, cap, bag, sack
    ɓɔrɔ

to hate
    kpɔara

hate
    ɓɛlɛ-kpe-goi

to have a chill
    kɔlɛ a tɛ́i

head, chapter in a book
    -ŋuŋ

head-tie, scarf
    kpâsa
    kpâ-saa

to heal
    ɓálo

healthy
    gbène-lɛ́lɛɛ
    gbònoi lɛ́lɛ
    gɔ̀lɔi-pono

to hear, obey
    mɛni

heat
    fãa

heaven
    ɣele

heavy
    wiɛ

heel (of the foot)
    -túme

help, gather, collect, pile up
    kpɔŋ

herb
    tuma-laa

here
    bɛ́
    bɛ́-pere - this way
    bɛ́ ŋí ma - over here
    bɛ́i kélee...na - wherever

hew, carve
    saa

highway
    keleŋ-pere

hill
    yée
    sii-sɛŋ gbiŋ

hit
    sɔɔ

hoe
    kâli
    loa

holiday
    ɣele kɛ̀tɛ

honest
    sãa

hook worm
    koi-nyii gbeli

horse
    soo

hospital
sále-pɛrɛ kɛ́tɛ

hospital, clinic
sále-pɛrɛ

hot, heat, to get hot
fãa
kɔlɔ fããi yâ? - do you have a fever?

hour
âba

house, hut, building
pɛ́rɛ

house boy
pɔrɔŋ-ɓɔi

house entrance
pɛrɛ-laa-lei

how?
léŋ

how
à gɛ̀ɛ leŋ

how much; how many
ɣɛɛlu

hundred
ŋuŋ

hunger
puru
puru káa mâ - I'm hungry

hurry
kirɛ

to hurt
sɔɔ

hurt, ache
sóli

hurt oneself
pronoun + -kpɔ́ɔ wâna
" -kpiŋ wâna

to husk, to shell
kala ɓo

I

illness
kɔlɔ-fela

important
kɛ́tɛ

to get an injection
saɣilaŋ siɣe

to give an injection
saɣilaŋ-tɛ́ɛ

injure
sɔɔ

in order to
a gɛɛ

in order to, so that
a kɛ̀

insecticide
kooŋ-sɛŋ sale

inside, area inside, in
-su

inside of a house
pɔ̂rɔŋ

intestines
-púlu

invite
ɓɛlɛ toli boɔ

iroko, mulberry tree
sìŋaŋ

iron, motor, machine
kɔli

it
la

Ivory Coast
Afɛko

J

January
Gɔlɛ-ɣaloŋ-leei

jealousy
tɔ̂lo

to be jealous
tɔ́lo kúla

jeweler
guro-ɣale-nʊ́u

joints
-kpulɔ̂ŋ

July
Gbɔyɔɔi

June
Niɣɛ-liɣɛi

K

kind, type, variety
sîi

king monkey
túa

knee
-ŋuḿe

knife
ɓóa

know, learn, find out
kɔ́lɔŋ

kola nut
tulê

Kpelle
kpɛlɛɛ
kpɛlɛɛ-nuu - Kpelle man

Kru
kûluŋ
kúruŋ

L

lake, pond
púa

land, floor, earth, ground, soil
lɔii

language
-wóo

lapa
laa-seɣe
pɛ̀lɛ-mɛi-sêɣe

lapa, skirt
ɣili maa sêɣe

last (as in last month)
pɔlɔi

last price
laa-see

late
maâ-tinaŋɔ

later, after a while
nei

latrine
kpó-pɛrɛ

laugh
ɣɛ́lɛ

law
tɔ̂ŋ

lay
láa

lazy
zu-saa

leaf
láa
laa-kpaa - leaf of plants
tóu-laa - palm leaf

learn
kɔlɔŋ

left
kɔɔ-yée-mɛi-pere

on the left
kɔɔ-yee mɛi-pere

leg
-kɔ́ɔ

lemon
gamɛ́nɛ-loŋ

leper
gbôdo-nuu

leprosy
gbôto
gbôdo

letter
kɔlɔ

letter (in a word)
wóo-kɛ-sɛŋ

lie down
láa

life
fulu-laa

lift
tɛ́
siɣe

to like
wɛ́li

liquid medicine
sale-kpele

little, small
kuro-te
dekpé

liver (center of emotion)
-líi
-woni (Gbarnga)

living thing
fulu-sɛŋ

load (n.)
tiaŋ
kpîri

lock (on a door)
sɔ́ɔŋ

Lofa County
Dõaŋ lɔii

log (to sit on)
kpòno

logs, cut trees
wúru-pɔ́ŋɔɔ

Loma
tɔ̃a

long
kôya

a long time ago
wɔlɔ wɔlɔ

a long time to get well
a tăi su-koya seɣe é lɛɛ kpɛɛ

loom
gbiniŋ pú ma

loosen
fúloŋ

a lot, much
ŋanaa

speak louder
í wóo tɛ́ ɣelèi

love	wέli-kέ-maa
to love	wέli
lungs	-fûle

M

machine	kɔli
main road	pere-lee
malaria	kpene fã́a-maa kpono kelêŋ-maa
man, husband, male	surɔ̂ŋ surɔ̂ŋ-loo - small boy
man, person	ŋúu nuu-kpune - human being
Mandingo	mɛniŋ
mango	maŋuŋ
Mano	mɔ̃a mánɔ
manure, fertilizer	taa-tulɛ-kpo
March	Vuu-laɣii
to marry a woman	nɛnî kula
mat	gára
matter, thing, business, palaver	mɛni
to become physically mature (female)	kpela
May	Gâli-kalai

maybe	γele da
measles	mɔ̃-nyii
dry meat	sua kpálaa
medical man, traditional doctor	zoo
medicine	sale
medium size	gbene pɔliɛ zu
melt	seγeŋ
men, people	nûa - pl. of nuu
men, males	sinâa - pl. of surôŋ
middle	-sama
midnight	kpíni sama
milk	niŋa ŋini-ya
rice mill	mɔlɔŋ sia-pɛ́rɛ lá
mist, fog, dew	lúu
moan	kɔ̃ɔŋ
Monday	Mɔne
money bus	bɔsii kpaya-kpaya ŋa
money, change	sɛŋ-kau
Monrovia	Dûkɔɔ
month, moon	γáloŋ
morning	γele-waa vólo aâ nyii see
this morning	ŋele-waai ŋi su
mortar	kpɛnɛ̂ŋ konâ
mother (title of respect used for older woman)	-lee
mother-in-law	nyûo-la
motor bike	ŋɔsoo-kɔli
mountain	yée-kɛtɛ
mouth, opening, open top of a container, entrance, doorway, bank (of a stream), side of a surface. (In English translated with prepositions - by, at, or next to.)	-lá
move from	siγe
much, many, plenty	támaa
mud	pôrɔ
muscle	yée-kɔŋ

mushroom
    féna

must, compelled to
    fɛ̂ɛ

multiply
    ye bu gie ma

N

nail
    nêre

name
    -lắa

nearness, vicinity
    kɔlɛ

neck
    -kɔ́ŋ

necklace
    kwɛyɛ̂ŋ

needle
    sắɣilaŋ

neice
    măleŋ-nɛni

nephew
    -mâleŋ
    măleŋ

new
    nina

new (things or people who are new to a place)
    wûnu

new cloth
    seɣe-nina

news
    tuŋ

next (as in next day)
    ninai

next to
    -lá

night, darkness
    kpíni

nightgown
kpíni-seɣe

Nimba County
Gỉo lɔii

no
kpaa
kpao

noise, sound
tíŋ

noon
fólo maa láa

nose
-sʊ́a

now
lèni-maa

November
Bɔrɔŋ-kpalai

nurse
dàa-daa
fɛ̂lee-zoo

O

to obey
ɓâa-kɛ-maa
mɛni

ocean, Atlantic ocean, lake
yʊ́o

October
ŋweei

offer
fanâ-ɓo

oil, fat, grease
wúlɔ

old
kwatara

old, to get old
pɔlɔ

old, ancient
bɔlɔ-pɔlɔ

old man
siɛ-pɔlɔ

older sibling
-lia
nia-surɔŋ - my older brother
nia-nɔni - my older sister

on, surface of a thing
-mà

once, one at a time
tɛi-tɛ̂i
tɔnɔ-tɔnɔ

one
tɔnɔ

one (used only in counting)
táaŋ
taɣaŋ

one by one, several, a few
tɛi-tɛi

one cent, penny
kâpa

onion
yaɓa

only, just
nɔ

open mole
kɔ̂li

opening
-lá

operate
nuu-ɓ̂elaa

oppossum
kpeye

or
kpaa
máŋ

orange
gamɛ́nɛ

overlook
naŋîŋ

over there
mánaa

to own
pɔ́ɔ

ownership: mine, yours, his
-pɔɔ (with à̲)

P

page in a book
kɔlɔ-láa

palaver
mɛni

palaver hut
kêre

palaver sauce
kɔ̀lɔ-kɔlɔ

palm kernal
tɔlî

palm nut
tóu

palm butter
tou kpɔ́rɔ

palm oil, oil, fat, grease
wúlɔ

palm wine
kéle-lɔɔ
tóo-lɔɔ

pan, pot
leɣi

pan
pâne

pants
bɛ̂lɛ

paper
kɔlɔ

paramount chief
pâma-sii

particle (used to emphasize subject, object, compl. and after question words)
ɓé

pass by, send, give, surpass
tɛɛ
ŋaloŋ tɛ̀ɛ ti - last month

path
kpôwo
pere

patience
lii-kpele

pawpaw, papaya
dɔŋkɔ́rɔŋ

pay
féla-fe

peace
lii see

Peace Corps Volunteer
nuu-kole

peanuts, groundnuts
telâŋ

peel
kɔlɔ ɓő

pencil
kɔlɔ-kpau

people
nûa (pl. of núu)
-ɓ̀ela (irr. pl. of núu)

pepper
kiyêŋ

person
núu

pharmacist
sale-tíi-kɛ́-nuu

piassava palm branch
kpâlo

piassava wine
kulu-lɔɔ

pick up, take, carry, take hold, lift, move from
siɣe

picture, image, copy, imitate
pɔkɔ̂ŋ

piece, section
-kpua

pig
ɓòi

pigeon, dove
tòloŋ

pineapple
kwíi-tou

pint
pâi

pipe vine
sɔɔ

to place, set, put, trust, lay, lie down
láa

to plant
sí
kwaa sí - to plant rice

plant, sapling
si-sɛŋ

plantains
gôi kpaya-kpaya

planting time (season)
sii sɛŋ si tãi
sii sɛŋ si ɣele

plate
pîleti

please, I beg you
kpera yɛ̂

plentiful
táma

suffix used to pluralize nouns
-ŋá

pocket
yifa

pod
si-sɛŋ bá
kúlaa

pond, lake
dɛnɛ̂ŋ

porch
si-yá

porcupine
pii

pot, cooking pot
leɣi

potato
kûyeŋ

pour, run away, empty out
pú

pound (measurement)
pǎu

to be pregnant
koi káa mà

pregnant woman
koi-nia

price, value
sɔ̃ɔ
sɔɔŋ

proverb
saŋ

pumpkin, squash
téa

pump
tɛ̂ya

pure in heart
lii maa-waa

push, move over
tûaŋ

put
lɔ́

Q

question (in phrase only)
    -marè
    màrẽ kɛ́ - ask him a question
    mare-kɛɛ kɛ́ - ask a question

quietness, silence
    tɔ̀ŋ

R

rabbit
    ŋela

raffia palm
    lfi

rain
    túna
    tina

rainy season
    samâ-ya ɣele

rash
    tɔɔ-sɛŋ
    lɔɔ̂

rattan
    bàla

raise
    tɔɔ

raise, bring up
    kɔ́ŋ
    ŋá kɔ́ŋ - rear

reach
    seri

receive
    sɔlɔ (with bó)

to be recovered (was sick, is now well)
    kɔlɔi a naa póno

red, ripen, dye red, ripe
    kpɔlu

red, ripe
    mɔ́ɔ

red deer, antelope
    lóma

region, neighborhood
kpîniŋ

remainder, rest, the other
kpèli

remember (keep in mind)
-kili a gɛ́ɛ
a gɛ́ɛ-kili

rent
síγaŋ

resemble, look like
ɓóloŋ

respect
ɓɛlɛ

rice
mɔlɔŋ

rice bird
hâya
saa-ya

rice bird, weaver bird
sɔ́ya

rice farm before burning, when all trees are cut
gbɔrɔ

rice kitchen
mɔlɔŋ kère

swamp rice
ǹyá mɔlɔŋ

rice grain
mɔlɔŋ kao

rice seed
mɔlɔŋ kɛ̃ɛŋ

rice, sprouted
mɔlɔŋ mɔ́ŋɔɔ

rice straw
mɔlɔŋ γala

rice (unccoked)
mɔlɔŋ-kao

rice, upland
mɔlɔŋ kpala

to be rich
tɔɔ

to get rich
kpɛtɛ

rickets
kpɔrɔŋ

right away, immediately, soon
a maa felaa

right away, soon
loníi ma

(the) right
láa mii-yée mɛi-pere

ring
gbôno

rise
tɛ́

river, creek
yá

road
pere

Robertsport
Lɔba-po
Vái lɔii

rogue
wúma-nuu

room
lômpo

root
same

root, vine
kpɔmɔ

rope
ɣɛli

rotten
kara

rubber-tapper
tâpi kɛ́-núu

rubber tree
lɔba wúru
mãaŋ wúru

runny nose
-sũa yá pú

in a rush, with haste
fîe-fîe

S

sacrifice
sâla
sâla kula - make a sacrifice

St. Paul River
Dɛŋ

salt
kpolo

sand
ŋɛ̃ya

sandals
kpiri-kɔlɔ

sap, latix
mãaŋ yá
lɔɓa yá

satisfaction
lii-laa

Saturday
Salaide

savannah
wóla

say
kɛ́

say (used always with a pronoun prefixed)
yɛɛ

scab
-luu à naa seɣe

to scare away birds
ŋɔni kpɛ̂ɛ

scarf
kpâsa
kpâ-saa

schoolhouse
kɔlɔ-pɛrɛ

scratch
kɔlɔ-wɔlɔ

scratch, bruise
tua

screen
kɔli-dêŋa

the second time
a veerɛ-ɣelei

secretary
kɔlɔ pɔ̃yɛ-nuu

seedling
si-sɛŋ mɔ́ŋ

-self
kpiŋ (Totota)
kpɔ́ɔ (Gbarnga)

sell
kɔlɛ

send
tɛɛ

sentence
wóo-ɣɛli

September
Danai

sesame
ɓ̂ɛsɛ
mɛsɛ

sesame seed
b̀ɛsɛ-kao

set a bone
gàu-see gie-ŋa
maa-fela-laa

sew
sɔ́lɔ

shade
nini

shadow, shade
ninîŋ

shady
kpiniŋ

shake, deceive, fool
túmo

shake, tremble
kpɛlîŋ

shake hands, snap fingers
sɛ́rɛ

sharpen (a knife)
ŋâli

shilling (used to be equivalent to 20¢)
sèleŋ

shine
fólo
too

shoe
kɔ́ɔ ŋá-kɔlɔ

shore
sîŋ

short
kpua

shoulders
káaŋ

shout
laɣi

shovel
sɔɓ̂ele

show, appoint, teach
lɛ́

ship, steamer
yá ŋá-keleŋ

shirt
yɛ̂kɛ

sibling of the opposite sex -
i.e., man's sister
-sâabɔ̂lɔ

sick
kɔ́lɛ

to be sick
kaa kɔlɛ̂i

Sierra Leone
Sɛ̂loŋ

side (of one's body)
-pɛ̂rɛ

silence
tɔ̀ŋ

silent
tíniŋ

silver
káne

sit, sit down, place, set
see

a place to sit
-seèi

skin, book, paper, letter
-kɔlɔ

skip over, step over, take over,
put over, overlook
naŋìŋ

skirt
ɣili maa sèɣe

sky
ɣele

sleep
nyii

sleeve (long)
seɣe yée-koya

sloppy
láa-laǎ

small
kuraté (Sanoyea dialect)
digbɔ (Jorquellie dialect)

small
pɛ̀lɛ
pɛ̀lɛ-pɛlɛɛ
ŋania-pɛlɛɛi - my children

smile
ŋɛi-kɛ
mɔ-mɔ̀

snake
kali

Snake Society members
kali-lonii

sneeze
tisô

sob
wɔlɔ-saa zu

soft
bɔvuu

soil, dirt, topsoil, clay, mud
pɔ̀rɔ

some, any
ta

someday, sometime
ɣele da

son-in-law
ɓɔɔlɔ-lɔŋ

sore
- mua
- pala

sore (adj.)
- paa
- paa kɛ́ɛ núu (body part) ma - sore body part

soup (stew or soup to eat with cooked rice)
- láo

sour
- wóloŋ

speed, hurry, haste
- kirɛ

speak, count
- lóno

speak, open
- bó

speech
- -wóo

spend a long time, behave
- tûa

spider
- sĩi

spin
- tinaa maa
- pɔ̃lɔ

to spindle
- pɔ̃ɔlɔ

spit
- -láa-yá

spoiled, rotten
- kara

spoon
- mina

spouse
- maamu
- -pɔ̂ŋ

sprout, germinate
- pɔmǔŋ

sprouted seed
- sii-sɛŋ mɔ́ɔ

squirrel
- looŋ

stand up
- tɔɔ

star
- pêmɛlɛŋ-kau

start, begin, bend over, bend down
- pɛlɛ

stay (a while)
- nɔ́mu

stay in bed
- ye lɛɛ laai

step over
- naŋîŋ

stick
- wúru-kau

stingy
- kala-kalai (lit., you are hard to deal with)

stock a fish pond
- nyɛ̃ɛ dɛnɛ̂ŋ kpɛ́tɛɛ

stomach
- -koi
- -kui
- -koo

stop, beg, ask
- kpera
- kpera yɛ̂ - please, I beg of you

storm	fãa kɛ́tɛ
stove	leɣi ɣili kɔli
straight	peleŋ
straight, honest, just	sãa
stranger	ŋɔ̃́ya
strip	m̀ela
strong	su-kpanâŋɔɔ
student	kɔlɔ-pɛrɛ-nuu
study	maa kɔri
subtract	de kúla zu
sue in court	kɔlɔ siɣe
sugar cane	kúlɔ
sun	fólo
Sunday	Sɔne
sundown, sunset	ɣele-wii-fólo
sun up	vólo aâ kúla
sunny (sunshine time or season)	fólo tóo ɣele
surpass	tɛɛ
surprise	kula
surround	tínaŋ
to swallow	kpele
swamp	pâra
swamp rice	para-mɔlɔŋ
sweep	làa kêle
sweet, savory	líyeŋ nɛɛ
syllable	wóo kpuà

T

table
têeɓɔle

tablet, pill
sale-kau

taboo
tĩya

tailor
seɣe-sɔlɔ-nuu

take out, come out, get out, surprise, come across
kula

talisman, medicine container (hung around a child's neck for protection)
sêɓɛ

tall
mu-seɣeɛ

tangerine
gaménɛ pɛlɛ-pɛlɛɛ

tap (a rubber tree)
tapiŋ-kɛ́ɛ

taxes
féla

taxi
sɛŋ-kau kɔi keleŋ

teach
lɛ́

teacher
sɛŋ-lɛ́-nuu

ten
puu

termite, bug-a-bug
sina

thanks
sɛɣɛ̂
sɛɣɛ̂ fɛ - give thanks
isɛɣɛ̂ - thank you

that
tí

that
nyítí

thatch roof
pɛ́rɛ-kpɛ̃ya

then
ŋaŋ

there
naa

thick
dɛɛ-gie

thin
bɔliɛ-zu

thing, matter
mɛni

thing, object
sɛŋ
sɛ̃ɛ̃ - plural

think
kili-ŋa-sia

this
ŋí

this
nyíŋi

thousand
wála

thread
yee

three
saaɓa

throat
-kɔna

thunder
ɣeie-gbana

Thursday
Tɛɣɛide

tie
ɣiri

time
tãi

tin can
kɔ̂pu

tiredness
fíi
ḿuíi aȁ kpɛɛ - I'm tired

tobacco
taaŋ-kpala

today
sâa

today, this day
sáa ɣele ŋi

toe
-kɔ́ɔ-gbua

together, each other
kie

tomorrow
tínaa

tongue
-ŋɛ́ŋ

tooth
-nyíŋ

top (of a surface)
-tôŋ

on top of, top area of a thing
ŋá

towel
tâɓa

town, village
taa

train
kɔni seɣe keleŋ

trap
ɓáre
ɓare tɔɔ - set a trap

trash
kala

treasure, favorite
lií-mɔ-sɛŋ

tree, stick
wúru

tremble
kpɛlîŋ

tribal, customary matter
lɔii-meni

tribal initiation school
pɔ́lɔŋ

tribe
-sîi

trouble
mɛni-kpɔlu

trousers, pants
bɛ̂lɛ

trouser leg
miliŋ

truck
keleŋ

to trust
láa

tuberculosis
kane-tɔ̃ɔŋ
ŋaa-tɔ̃lɛ

Tuesday
Tuide

turn, stir, change
pene

turn around, surround, delay
tínaŋ

turn the soil, till
lɔii peleɛ

turtle
samu

two
feerɛ

U

umbilical cord
surɔ̂ŋ-pɔlɔ
nɛni-pɔlɔ

umbrella (sun shade)
fólo-kpanâŋ

unconscious
à fũo

unburned brush
tâpia kɔli

uncle (father's brother)
-nâŋ

uncle (mother's brother)
-kêra

under, the area under something
-mù

underbrush, thick bush, shrub
kpɔlɔ

unhealthy
gbène fé lɛlɛɛ ni

unripe
gbolô

upward, toward the sky
ɣelêi
i woó tɛ́ ɣelêi - speak louder

urine
wòɓe

V

vaccination
máki

Vai
vái

vegetable
tuma-laa

vehicle, boat, canoe, ship, car, truck
kéleŋ

vein
-nana

very much
kpɔ́
ǹɛ́lɛ̂i kpɔ - very good

vexed, angry
lii wana

vicinity
kɔlɛ

village
kpanâŋ

vine
ɣɛli-kpɔ̀mɔ

visitor
ŋɔ̃́ya

voice
-wóo

Voinjama
Vɔ̃ŋ-sɛŋ-ma

W

wage due for work, tuition, taxes
féla
dí í féla fè? - did they pay you?

wait, stop
tɔɔ

waist
-leŋei
-sama

wake up
ŋaa-ɓo

walk, rub, beat
sia

walk about, stroll
sia-sia

wall
káŋ
ɓerei-ɓɔnɔ (Jorquellie dialect)

want, wish, like, love
wɛ́li

wash
waa

wasp
gbɔ́mɔ

waterfall
sulûŋ

water green
yata-laa

way, road, path
pere

weave
pala
ye gbiniŋ ma

Wednesday
Wɛ̂ɛde

weed
kala

week
lɔ̂ku
lɔ́ɔ-kuu

weigh
kɔɔ̂ŋ

well
yá ñyá tɛ́i

to be well
kɔlɔi pónoɔ̂i

west
vóloi à yeŋ

wet
yɔɔ̂
túma

what
lé

when (?)
γɛlɛ

where
kɔɔ

where
mí

which
nênɛ

white
kole
kwíi-kole - white person,
European, American,
educated person

who
gbɛ̂ɛ

whole, unbroken
kpune

whooping cough
zu-koo-tɔ̃lɛ

wild animal, meat
fɛnɛ-sɛŋ

wild boar, bush hog, pig
ɓòi

will, desire
nîa

wind
fãa

to win
ɓaraa-yeé-mɛi-γaleɛ

window
wẽne

with
a

within the year
nyɔ̂ɔ

wives of a polygamous man
sonia
pɛ́rɛ-lee - head wife

woman, wife
nɛnî
nɛyâa - pl.

word, voice, sound, language, noise,
speech
-wóo

work, farm
tíi

worker
tíi kɛ́-nuu
tíi ké-ɓela - pl.

working day
ɣele-kuu

worry
lii-sɛlɛŋ

wrap, fold, curl up
kpíniŋ

write, mark
pɔ̃yɛ

writer, clerk, secretary
kɔlɔ-pɔ̃yɛ-nuu

Y

yams
yáu

yam-like tuber
súɓɛlɛ

yard
panâŋ ma

year
kɔ́raŋ

yellow
kpeleŋ

yellow fever
kpeleŋ-kɛ̃ɛŋ

yes
owêi

yes (used as a response to greetings, or to indicate you are listening)
m̀m̀
ḿḿ

yesterday
wɛɛ

yet, still
niî

young (note: this word has a wide range of meanings: fruits not yet ripe, food that is cooking, but that is not yet cooked, etc.)
tɔ̂kɔ

younger sibling
-lêɣe
-lêɣe-surɔŋ - younger brother
-lêɣe-nɛni - younger sister

Z

Zorzor
    Zɔzɔ

Zwedru
    Zʊɛdu

CHAPTER VI

LEARNING THE SOUND SYSTEM OF MANDE LANGUAGES

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter is designed to provide a deeper basis for the understanding of the sound systems of the Mande languages of Liberia. Although every attempt has been made to reduce the amount of technical language used to convey the information in this chapter, it has not been eliminated altogether, for what is used is felt to be necessary for the presentation.

Nevertheless, what follows can be followed by an enthusiastic reader with no previous training in linguistics or language learning. For those seeking only further practice in the recognition of the phonetic distinctions found in Mande it is possible to skip directly to section F where there are listening exercises which may be carried out with the accompanying cassette tape. Then, if there is some confusion about the nature of the sound contrast being studied, the learner may then refer back to the section which discusses the nature of this contrast.

B. THE SYSTEM OF SOUNDS

A language consists of three major subsystems. It has an inventory of words known as a lexicon. It has a set of rules by which these words are arranged into sentences, known as syntax. Finally it has a sound system which consists of a set of discrete contrastive sounds, known as phonemes. Phonemes, or rather strings of phonemes are used to render words as sound images so that they may be spoken and understood. This chapter is about how those sounds are organized and understood.

While phonemes are written using Roman alphabetic characters, they should not be confused with the letters used to write English. These are non-phonemic, because they violate the principle that a phoneme stands for only one contrastive sound. The following examples illustrate that the English alphabet violates this condition.

Letter	Sound	Word
s	s	see
	z	raise
	ž	measure
c	s	city
	k	cow
o	a	pod
	ɔ	log
	i	women
	ow	smoke

Because of these discrepancies, English is not perfectly phonemic which means that it is not always possible to determine how a word is going to be pronounced (given its spelling) or written (given its sound). Because of these indeterminancies in the writing system of English and many other written languages, linguists have found it useful to develop a phonemic writing system to use when analyzing a language. This writing system is also of value to learners of a language because it eliminates the guesswork in reading and writing in the language.

When you first hear a new language, you will first note that it is made up of a series of syllables. The syllable is a good place to begin breaking down the sounds of language because all three major phonetic elements: consonants, vowels and suprasegmental features are associated with the syllable.

At the heart of the syllable is a syllabic unit which is generally, though not always (as is pointed out later) a vowel. Vowels are sounds that receive their distinctive acoustical properties through the resonant properties of the mouth (oral cavity) and the throat (pharyngeal cavity) through adjustments of the tongue, tongue root, lips and jaw. The various resonances produced by these different oral shapes can be explained by the same principle as the resonant sound produced by blowing on a beer bottle, though the resonances produced by the more complex shapes of the vocal tract are of course more complex.

C. VOWELS

1. Classification

Linguists find it useful to classify vowels by:

a) the location of the tongue:

1. Is it toward the front of the mouth or
2. is it toward the back of the mouth?

b) the location of the jaw:

1. Is the jaw closed so that the tongue is high in the mouth or
2. is the jaw open so that the tongue is low in the mouth?

c) the shape of the lips:

1. Are the lips rounded or
2. are the lips unrounded?

The reason for this classification is that linguists have found that vowels that share common properties, (i.e. high vowels, front vowels or rounded vowels tend to function alike as we will show later). The classification of the vowels used in the Mande languages in Liberia is given in the following chart.

	Front	Back	Back & Rounded
High	i	ɨ	u
High Mid	e	ë	o
Low Mid	ɛ	ʌ	ɔ
Low	(æ)	a	

None of these sounds exactly like those of English therefore the following equivalents should only be taken provisionally, to help you learn to recognize the sounds associated with the symbols. Drills are given in section F to familiarize you with the use of this system in transcribing Mande sounds.

2. Description of Individual Vowels

2.1 The front, unrounded vowels:

/i/ bee, neat, tidy, me

The English vowel differs from the Mande /i/*, by being glided, that is, followed by *y* a semivowel (see below). Thus the word *bee* when transcribed phonetically is /biy/. If you say this word slowly, you may sense the /y/ at the end of the vowel.

Due to historical change, English words spelled with an *i* (e.g. bite) are no longer pronounced with an *i* (ee sound) but rather an *eye* sound. In making the transition to the phonemic writing system you may confuse the orthographic *i* (eye) and the phonemic /i/ (ee).

/e/ ("closed e") day, take, say

The English vowel differs from the Mande *e* in that it is glided, like the high vowel, it is followed by a *y* semivowel (see below). Thus the English word *day*, when transcribed phonetically, is /dey/ or perhaps /dɛy/. You can detect this *y* glide by saying the word *day* very slowly. You will note that while you start on the vowel /e/, you end with the vowel /i/. In learning to say this vowel say it slowly and cut off the *y* "offglide". For many speakers, the first part of the vowel is lower (closer to a phonetic /ɛ/) than a phonetic /e/. You can approximate the higher and tenser /e/ by tightening your lips, as in a smile.

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*The use of the slashes here is to distinguish phonemic transcriptions from orthographic.

Lorma and Kpelle have a definite suffix -i which when added to a word ending in a front vowel produces something like the glided vowels discussed above. This gives an opportunity to hear the glided and nonglided as contrastive forms.

Lorma	indefinite	definite
porcupine	pívícute	pívíí
road	pélé	péléí
house	pɛ́lɛ́	pɛ́lɛ́í

/ɛ/ ("open e") bed, lead, red, better

The English sound is virtually identical to the corresponding Mande sound.

/æ/ ("diagraph") bath, laugh

This sound does not occur in the Mande languages, but has been included in the list, because of the potential confusion between the written (orthographic) a of English and the phonemic /a/ (see 3 below).

2.2 The back, rounded vowels:

/u/ school, pool, tube, coo

This vowel, like the English iy is glided, but this time with the semivowel /w/ rather than /y/. Thus the above words are rendered phonetically as /skuwl/, puwl, tuwb, kuw/.

/o/ ("closed o") go, row, tone, toe

Like the vowel /ey/ this vowel is heavily glided. Again if you say these words slowly, you will note the presence of a w semivowel following the vowel nucleus (e.g., /gow, row, town and tow/.

/ɔ/ ("open o") caught, law, frog, log

This vowel is quite similar in sound and production to the underlined English vowels to the left. The only problem being that the ɔ sound does not exist in some dialects of American English. If, for example, when you say the words caught and cot the same way, or cannot hear any appreciable difference between them you are going to have to learn to hear and produce this contrast. Secondly, speakers from different regions do not agree on which English words have this open o sound. For some, words such as frog, log, hog, and so forth are pronounced with an a vowel, while for others they are pronounced with an open o.

2.3 The back (or central) unrounded vowels:

/ɨ/ ("barred i") just (see comments)

This is not a contrastive sound in English but occurs as a variant of the general unstressed vowel known as schwa, /ə/. Therefore it is roughly the equivalent of the second vowel in muffin or in the word just when unstressed.

/ɨ/ appears as a variant of the corresponding front vowel /i/ in Kpelle and southwestern dialects or Lorma, particularly following velar consonants (see below) which because they are articulated with the tongue back tend to draw the front vowel back.

Kpelle (ŋiliŋ/ = [ŋɨlɨŋ] 'bugabug'. (Square brackets are used to mark variant pronunciations). The Lorma u, particularly the wor
su 'in' is sometimes pronounced with this variant, e.g. sɨ.

/ë/ none

/ë/ is the higher mid equivalent of barred ɨ. It appears as a variant of /e/ in Kpelle and Lorma, particularly following velar consonants. (k, g, ɣ, ŋ). For a definition of "Velar" see section D2.1. Kpelle: /Kele/ = [Këlë]

/ʌ/ ("carrat") but, cut, put, hut

This vowel is found in some but not all English words written with a short u, (note the pronunciation of put, which has an oo sound rendered phonetically as a lax u written but not described here.

Like the two back unrounded vowels *ʌ* is also a variant of the corresponding front vowel *ɛ* in Kpelle and Lorma, particularly following velars. Kpelle: /kɛlɛ/ = [kʌlʌ]

/a/ h*o*t, l*o*t, h*o*pper

This is the only low vowel in Mande, and should cause little difficulty to the speaker of English other than the tendency to confuse it with the written (orthographic) *a* which as we pointed out earlier is pronounced as /æ/.

3. Diphthongs

Diphthongs are sequences of a vowel and a semivowel which tend to act as a single unit. We have already mentioned the diphthongs /*iy*, *ey*, *uw* and *ow*/ above. In addition, English has the diphthongs /ay/ as in *sky*, *tie* and *light*, /aw/ as in *cow* and *now*, /oy/ as in *boy*, *toy* and *noise*. These sounds do not occur in the Mande languages. However, the sequences /*ii*, *ei*, *ɛi* and we now add/*ai*/ are found in some of the Mande languages but because *i* acts as a full vowel and not a nonsyllabic semivowel, these are generally not considered diphthongs.

4. Orthographic Conventions

As mentioned earlier the phonemic writing system is not in wide use for the writing of Liberian languages. For example personal names and locations have been rendered in standard English orthography. Becuase of the inadequacies of the English orthography to render certain Africa sounds, a number of conventions have been developed. These are given as follows:

Convention	Phonimic Value	Comments/Examples
ie	/i/	Bodegie = /Bodɛgi/
ue	/u/	Bague = /Bagu/
eh	/ɛ/	Zleh Town = /Zlɛ taw̃/
ea*	/ɛ/	Salayea = /Salayɛ/
or	/ɔ/	Zorzor = /Zɔzɔo/ Lorma /Lɔɔma/

*This seems to be a Lorma/Kpelle convention only.

5. Nasalized Vowels

A nasalized vowel is a vowel in which some sound is allowed to escape through the nose (nasal cavity) as well as the mouth (oral cavity). While nasal vowels exist in English they are noncontrastive variants of oral vowels usually derived form the nasalization of an adjacent nasal consonant spilling onto the vowel, as such words as moon, [mũwn]; soon [sũwn]; and can't [kããt] illustrate. Nasalization is marked by placing a tilde /~/ over the vowel. In the Mande languages, nasalization is contrastive...especially in Kpelle.

6. Vowel Length

Mande languages have contrastive vowel length. That is some syllables may be longer in duration than others. This difference can signal a difference in meaning as in the following Lorma examples:

kálíí ...... hoe   káálíí ...... snake

máságìì .... chief   mááságìì .... corn

D. LEARNING MANDE CONSONANTS

1. Classification

In addition to the vowels, which form the nucleus of most syllables, are the consonants. They are so called because they "sound with" the vowel and are accordingly found on either side of the vowel. While it is common to find consonants on either end of the English syllable, s t r e n g th, consonants in Mande tend to appear before rather than after the vowels. In other words, Mande syllables tend to be "open" (an open syllable is one in which no consonants follow the vowel, e.g., pɛ, lɛ, kpɔ). The one exception to this is the velar nasal /ŋ/ in Kpelle. Some open syllables cause trouble for English speakers, because the sound ɛ does not occur in English open syllables. (This is the reason for the development of ea and eh as a way of writing /ɛ/: see section C.)

Furthermore, Mande allows very few consonant clusters in a syllable initial position (before the vowel). These clusters only involve /l/, (as in /Flomo/ 'personal name' and as in /kwele/ 'big.'

The consonants of the Mande languages are given in tabular form below:

	Labial	Dental	Palatal	Velar	Labio Velar
STOPS:					
Voiceless	p	t	č	k	kp
Voiced	b	d	ǰ	g	
IMPLOSIVES:	ɓ	ɗ			gɓ
FRICATIVES:					
Voiceless	f	s	š		
Voiced	β V	z	ž	ɣ	
NASALS:	m	n	ň	ŋ	ŋm
LIQUIDS:		l,r			
SEMI VOWELS:			y		w

These sounds have been arranged in such a way that the rows and columns contain similar classes of sounds. For example, it was pointed out in the preceeding section that the front vowels (/i, e and ɛ/) were often backed (converted to ɨ, ë and ʌ respectively) or that vowels tended to be nasalized following a nasal consonant. These terms, of course do not have to be learned, though they may be useful in helping you understand the pronunciation of these sounds.

2. Points of Articulation

Part of the production of a consonant involves either the complete or partial obstruction of the flow of air in the oral cavity. This is accomplished through bringing an articulator, lower lip, or the front, mid or back of the tongue into proximity with a point of articulation associated with the upper part of the mouth. These points of articulation are discussed below. Individual sounds will be discussed later.

2.1 Labial:

The term labial means "pertaining to the lips." There are two types of possible labial articulation: bilabial (both lips) /p, ɓ, and β/ and labial dental (lower lip and upper teeth) /f, and v/.

2.2 Dental:

Dental articulations involve moving the front part of the tongue behind the upper teeth as in /t, d, s, z, n, r and l/.

2.3 Palatal:

While these sounds are rare in Mande languages they do occur. They are produced by bringing the mid part of the tongue in the hard palate region as in /č, ǰ, ď, ž, ñ and y/.

2.4 Velar:

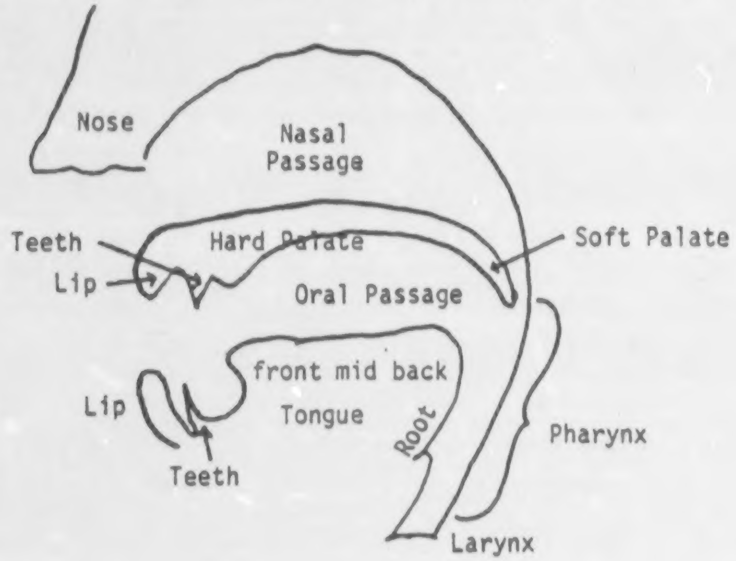
This sound is produced by raising the back of the tongue to the region of the soft palate as in /k, g, ɣ, ŋ./

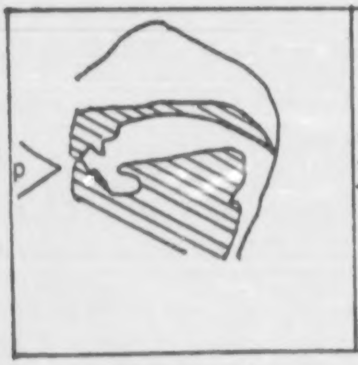
2.5 Labio-Velar:

This sound is the most difficult sound for speakers of English to master. First it involves the simultaneous articulation of a labial and a velar. It is as though you were trying to say cookpot or lugbolt but with open syllables (e.g. coo-kpot and lu-gbolt). Secondly, these sounds are often pronounced with ingressive air (the air moves into the mouth during the first moments of articulation before it is followed by egressive air from the lungs (the normal mode). This implosion is more typical of gb than kp.

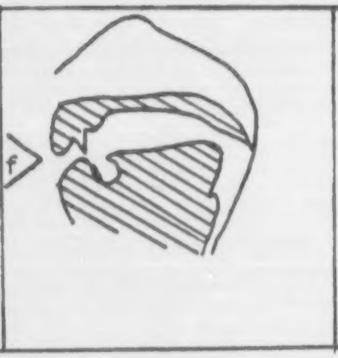
3. Picturing the Points of Articulation.

The following cross sections of the human vocal apparatus may prove useful in understanding how the various points of articulation are located.

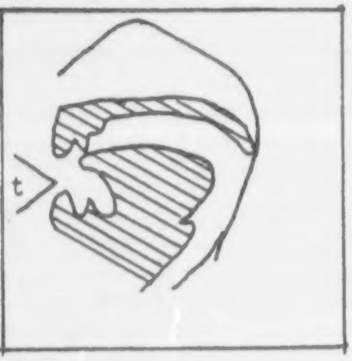




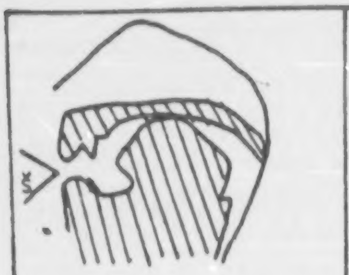
Bilabial Stop



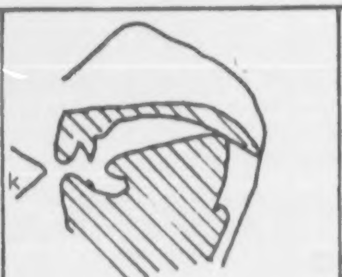
Labial-Dental



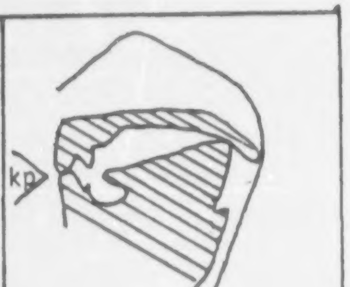
Dental



Palatal



Velar



Labio-Velar

4. Manner of Articulation

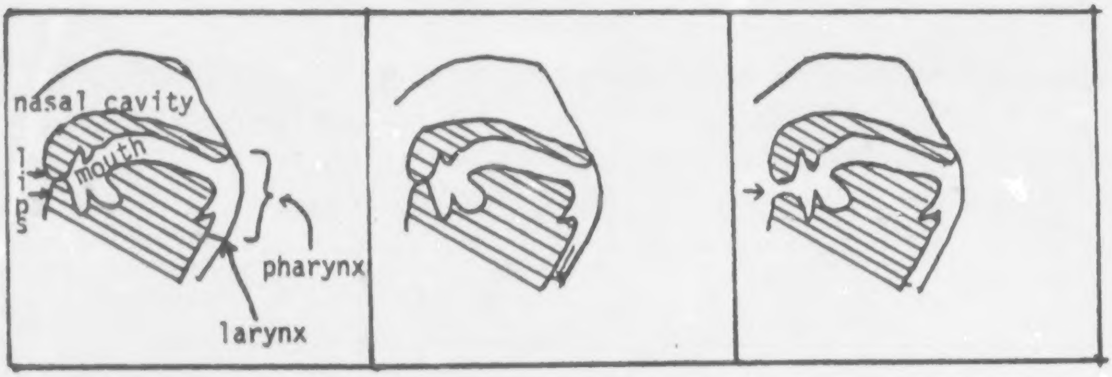
Sounds can also be classified by how they are produced at the point of articulation. This is called the manner of articulation.

4.1 Obstruents:

Obstruents are sounds which involve a radical obstruction of the air stream, either complete blockage as in *stops* or partial blockage as in *fricatives*. Obstruents may be either *voiced* or *voiceless* which means that the vocal cords are either vibrating or not respectively. You can detect the difference between voicing and nonvoicing either by putting your fingers on your larynx (Adam's apple) or in your ears while you are saying these sounds. You will no doubt notice that in English, the fricatives /f/ and /z/ are more heavily voiced than the stops /b, d and g/. This is because in English, the voiceless stops /p, t, and k/ are heavily aspirated. This means that they are followed by a puff of air (capable of blowing out a candle) which devoices the beginning of the following vowel. Because the aspiration also serves to distinguish English voiceless vowels, the voicing distinction is not crucial. Fortunately for English speakers, the voiceless obstruents of Mande are also aspirated, though not as heavily. The two sounds /č/ and /ǰ/ listed as palatal stops in the previous illustration are actually *affricates*. This means that phonetically they consist of a stop followed by a fricative [tš] and [dž] respectively. However because they function as a unit, they are given the unitary symbols /č/ and /ǰ/.

4.2 Implosives:

The normal manner of articulation involves the use of (egressive) air coming from the lungs. In the articulation of implosives, air is drawn into the mouth by creating a partial vacuum in the pharynx by first closing it off at either end by making a velar, dental or labial stop at one end and a gluttal stop (closing the larynx) at the other end. Then the pharynx is stretched by lowering the larynx and in so doing creating a partial vacuum in the pharynx. Thus when the stop is articulated, for a brief moment, air will rush into the mouth briefly giving it its distinctive sound before the egressive air from the lung resumes.



closure lowering release

The remaining set of consonants, the nasals, semi-consonants and semivowels are all voiced. Nasals can best be defined as voiced stops with the added feature of the opening up of the nasal passage.

The semi-consonants and the semivowels are like the nasals are resonant which means that there is less obstruction of the air stream than in the case of the stops and fricatives (known collectively as obstruents). The lack of obstruction allows the vocal tract to resonate giving the nasals, semi-consonants and semivowels their distinctive acoustical character.

Unlike the nasals where the resonance is produced in the nasal cavity, the resonance of the semi-segments is produced in the oral cavity. Semi-consonants are distinguished from semivowels in that semi-consonants are considered less obstructed or weakened consonants while the semivowels are considered more obstructed than true vowels.

4.3 Sonorants:

The remaining sets of consonants are called sonorant becuase in addition to having an oral obstruction of some sort they also have resonance. For example in the nasals, the way is opened for sound to move into the nasal cavity which is a resonant chamber. In the case of the liquid l, the air is permitted to escape around the sides of the tongue producing resonance. And finally, in the case of the semivowels /y/ and /w/ which are nonsyllabic vowels, (i and u respectively) the resonance is merely dampened. Sonorants, which also include all the vowels are generally voiced. All sonorants have the capacity to be syllabic. As pointed out above the syllabic equivalents of /y/ and /w/ are /i/ and /u/ respectively. Other syllabic sonorants can be marked by placing an apostrophe directly under the segment. In the Mande languages nasals are often syllabic as in Kpelle: ḿ̩búlú, Bande: ǹ̩dàmbángí. Lorma once had these sounds but they have since been lost.

4.4 Concluding Remarks

Much of what was presented here was quite technical and beyond what you really need to know to learn a Mande language. Yet it was presented for a number of reasons:

(1) it may help you to better understand how the consonant system of a language is structured

(2) that Mande languages are an interesting and fruitful area of scientific inquiry

(3) and because we thought you'd like to know.

E. MANDE SUPRASEGMENTALS

1. Classifications

In addition to consonants and vowels, a syllable may also posses a number of characteristic features called suprasegmentals. They are so called because their distinctiveness may transcend a single segment.

Features often considered to be suprasegmental are stress or syllable prominance, tone, vowel length and nasalization. Vowel length and nasalization have been presented in the section on vowels.

2. Stress

While stress is generally non-contrastive in Mande it is generally distinctive. In Kpelle, it falls on the first high-toned syllable in the word, or if the word has no high tones, it falls on the first syllable. Stress is acoustically marked by an increase in the loudness of the syllable and is often accompanied by a slight increase in the length of the syllable.

3. Tone

Tone in Mande is characterized by relative pitch. That is a high tone is relatively higher in pitch than a low tone and vice versa. No Mande language has more than three distinctive pitch levels. Kpelle and Mano have three: high, mid and low, while Loma and Manya have two. The following contrasts are from Kpelle:

high	pɛ́lɛ́	'house'
mid	pɛ̄lɛ̄	'road'
low	bɛ̀lɛ̀	'trousers'

The remaining Mande languages have only two level tones, high and low. The above contrasts appear in Mende as follows:

high	pɛ́lɛ́	'house'
low high	pèlé	'road
low	bɛ̀lɛ̀	'trousers'

In Lorma due to some historical change, the tones of the above words are high, though the different words to exert an influence on the following word as the following examples show.

pɛ́lɛ́	'house'	pɛ́lɛ́nììnɛ̀	'new house'
pélé	'road'	péléníínɛ́	'new road'
bɛ́lɛ́	'trousers'	bɛ́lɛ́niinɛ́	'new trousers'

3.1 Contour Tones

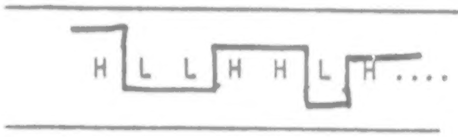
Contour tones are tones that actually rise or fall, rather than remain at the same pitch throughout the syllable. When these tones appear on a single syllable, they are written as follows:

falling	V̂	Kpelle:	ɓû	'owl'	Mende: mbû	'owl'
rising	V̌	Kpelle:	mɔ̄lɔ̌ŋà	'rice'	Mende: mbǎ	'rice'

Rising tones and falling tones are heard in Lorma as sentence level intonations. A comma or a question mark following a low tone will produce a rising tone. A period following a high tone will produce a falling tone. Since this is not a property of the word, and since the tonal influence is really marked by the punctuations, these rising and falling tones are not otherwise marked.

3.2 Down-Drift and Down-Step

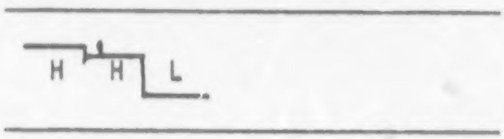
In most Mande languages there is some downdrift and downstep. Downdrift is a general condition where a high tone following a string of one or more low tones is not as high in absolute pitch as the high tone preceding the low tone. Graphically this condition can be shown as follows:



Where H represents a high toned syllable and where L represents a low toned syllable.

3.3 Downstep

Downstep is very much like downdrift except here the lowered high follows a high tone directly. It is as though the intervening low tones were lost. Downstepped high tones are marked with an apostrophy before the high-toned syllable as in the following graphic example:



Downstep is not found in Lorma and has only a limited distribution in Kpelle where it occurs only at the end of sentences.

4. Word Types

Although not strictly speaking suprasegmental, it is worth mentioning that Mande words have definite phonological shapes. As mentioned earlier Mande syllables tend to be open and preceded by a single consonant. Such a syllable structure can be represented as CV where consonants are represented by the symbol C and vowels by V.

Pronouns, postpositions and verbal particals tend to be monosyllabic while nouns and verbs tend to be bisyllabic; words containing more than two syllables are either borrowings or morphologically complex (composed of more than one word). Given these facts, the learner can say a lot about the nature of the word simply on the basis of its phonological shape.

F. LISTENING AND TRANSCRIPTION EXERCISES

The following exercises have been recorded on tape. They are constructed in such a way that you may either do them orally, by covering up the answer with a card, or you may practice writing down the answers either in the space provided, or preferably on a sheet of scratch paper. Please note, that while these exercises will give you a general ability to recognize and transcribe these sounds you will find that additional work will be necessary with your target language before you can hear them clearly.

The Vowels

1. e vrs ey (If the vowel is glided write /ey/ while if it is not, write /e/.

1.		ey	11.	s m	sem
2.		e	12.	s m	seym
3.		e	13.	l	le
4.		ey	14.	l.	ley
5.	b t	bet	15.	s s	sesey
6.	b t	beyt	16.	t l	teyle
7.	f l	feyl	17.	m m	meme
8.	f l	fel	18.	k t	kete
9.	p n	peyn	19.	s	sey
10.	p n	pen	20.	s	se

2. i vrs e

1. ________________ i
2. ________________ e
3. ________________ e
4. ________________ i
5. ____s___________ si
6. ____s___________ se
7. ____t___________ te
8. ____t___________ te
9. ____t___________ ti
10. ____l___________ le
11. ____l___________ li
12. ____p____l______ pele
13. ____p____l______ pili
14. ____p____z______ pize
15. ____p____z______ pizi
16. ____f____l______ fili
17. ____f____l______ feli
18. ____f____l______ file
19. ____l____p______ lepe
20. ____l____l______ lili

3. e vrs ε vrs i

1. ________________ e
2. ________________ e
3. ________________ ε
4. ________________ e
5. ________________ i
6. ________________ e
7. ________________ ε
8. ____s___________ se
9. ____s___________ sε
10. ____s___________ si
11. ____p____l______ pεlε
12. ____p____l______ pele
13. ____p____l______ pili
14. ____p____l______ pile
15. ____p____l______ peli
16. ____p____l______ pεlε
17. ____s____l______ selei
18. ____t____l______ tεlεi
19. ____t____l______ tilε
20. ____p____l______ pεle

4. o vrs ow

1. __________ o
2. __________ ow
3. __________ ow
4. __________ o
5. __g_______ go
6. __g_______ gow
7. __s_______ sow
8. __s_______ so
9. __t_______ tow
10. __t_______ to
11. __t___n___ town
12. __t_______ to
13. __f___l___ folo
14. __f___l___ folow
15. __k___l___ kolo
16. __k___l___ kolei
17. __k_______ koo
18. __k_______ kow
19. __m___l___ molo
20. __b___n___ bono

5. o vrs u

1. __________ o
2. __________ u
3. __________ o
4. __________ o
5. __________ u
6. __g_______ go
7. __l_______ lo
8. __l_______ lu
9. __t___l___ tolo
10. __p___l___ pulu
11. __f___l___m__ folomo
12. __g___l___ gulu
13. __g___l___ gulo
14. __k___l___ kolo
15. __k___l___ kolu
16. __m___l___ mulu
17. __m___l___ molu
18. __n___w___ nowo
19. __n___w___ nowu
20. __t_______ too

6. o vrs ɔ vrs

1. ________ o
2. ________ ɔ
3. ________ ɔ
4. ________ o
5. ________ o
6. ________ ɔ
7. __t______ tɔ
8. __t______ to
9. __g______ go
10. __g______ gɔ
11. __g__l____ gɔlɔ
12. __k__l____ kɔlɔ
13. __k__l____ kolo
14. __g__l____ gulu
15. __g__l____ gɔlɔ
16. __t__l____ tɔlo
17. __t__l____ tulo
18. __t__l____ tolu
19. __p__l____ pɔlu
20. __p__l____ polu

7. a vrs ɔ

1. ________ a
2. ________ ɔ
3. ________ a
4. ________ ɔ
5. __p______ pa
6. __p______ pɔ
7. __p__l____ pɔlɔ
8. __p__l____ pala
9. __t__l____ tɔla
10. __t__l____ talɔ
11. __t__l____ talai
12. __p__l____ pɔlɔi
13. __p__l____ pɔlu
14. __p__l____ palu
15. __p__l____ palo
16. __p__l____ pola
17. __p__l____ pɔla
18. __p__l____ palɔ
19. __k__p____ kɔpɔ
20. __k__p____ kapa

8. ʌ vrs a vrs ë

1. ____________ a
2. ____________ ʌ
3. ____________ a
4. ____________ a
5. __b_________ ba
6. __b_________ bʌ
7. __b___l_____ bala
8. __b___l_____ bʌlʌ
9. __p___l_____ pala
10. __p___l_____ pʌlu
11. __t___l_____ tala
12. __t___l_____ tʌle
13. __t___l_____ tëlë
14. __g___l_____ gʌlʌ
15. __g___l_____ gëlë
16. __g___l_____ gala
17. __p_________ pa
18. __p_________ pë
19. __p_________ pʌ
20. __p_________ pë

9. ʌ vrs ë vrs ɨ

1. ____________ bʌ
2. ____________ bë
3. ____________ bɨ
4. ____________ gɨ
5. ____________ gë
6. ____________ gë
7. ____________ sʌ
8. ____________ së
9. ____________ së
10. ____________ sɨ
11. ____________ kɨ
12. ____________ kʌ
13. ____________ kɨ
14. ____________ kë
15. ____________ fë
16. ____________ fɨ
17. ____________ fʌ
18. ____________ fa
19. ____________ fë
20. ____________ tɨ

10. ʌ vrs ë vrs ɨ vrs e vrs ɛ

1. ______________ tɛlɛ
2. ______________ tʌlʌ
3. ______________ gele
4. ______________ gële
5. ______________ kili
6. ______________ kɨlɨ
7. ______________ kele
8. ______________ këlë
9. ______________ kʌlʌ
10. ______________ kɛlɛ
11. ______________ mʌ
12. ______________ mɛ
13. ______________ mi
14. ______________ mɨ
15. ______________ bë
16. ______________ ti
17. ______________ sʌ
18. ______________ fɨ
19. ______________ fɛ
20. ______________ gë

Mande Consonants

The following consonants should give you little difficulty and for that reason no drills are given: p, t, k, b, d, g, f, v, s, z, m, n, l, y and w.

11. kp vrs p vrs k

1. ______________ ka
2. ______________ pa
3. ______________ kpa
4. ______________ kpa
5. ______________ ka
6. ______________ pa
7. ______________ kpɛ
8. ______________ kɛ
9. ______________ pɛ
10. ______________ kpɛ
11. ______________ kpaka
12. ______________ pakpa
13. ______________ kapɛ
14. ______________ kpapa
15. ______________ kpiki
16. ______________ pike
17. ______________ kpolo
18. ______________ kulu
19. ______________ pulu
20. ______________ kpekpe

12. gb vrs g vrs b vrs kp

1. ______________ ba
2. ______________ ga
3. ______________ gɓa
4. ______________ gɓa
5. ______________ gɓɛ
6. ______________ bɛ
7. ______________ bɛ
8. ______________ gɛ
9. ______________ gu
10. ______________ bu
11. ______________ gɓu
12. ______________ bulu
13. ______________ gulu
14. ______________ gɓulu
15. ______________ saba
16. ______________ sagɓa
17. ______________ saga
18. ______________ taba
19. ______________ tokpo
20. ______________ tɔkpɔ

13. gb vrs ɓ vrs b vrs g vrs kp

1. ______________ ga
2. ______________ gɓa
3. ______________ ɓa
4. ______________ gɓa
5. ______________ ɓa
6. ______________ ba
7. ______________ ɓɛ
8. ______________ bɛ
9. ______________ bɛ
10. ______________ ɓɛ
11. ______________ ɓo
12. ______________ gbo
13. ______________ kpoli
14. ______________ ɓoli
15. ______________ buli
16. ______________ gɓuli
17. ______________ ɓuli
18. ______________ kpuli
19. ______________ puli
20. ______________ ɓaɓa

16. p vrs β vrs v vrs f

1. ______________ pa
2. ______________ fa
3. ______________ va
4. ______________ fa
5. ______________ va
6. ______________ βa
7. ______________ fa
8. ______________ va
9. ______________ va
10. ______________ βa
11. ______________ βi
12. ______________ vi
13. ______________ vili
14. ______________ βili
15. ______________ fili
16. ______________ βulu
17. ______________ vulu
18. ______________ fɔlɔ
19. ______________ βɔlɔ
20. ______________ vɔlɔ

17. š vrs ž vrs č vrs ǰ

1. ______________ sa
2. ______________ ča
3. ______________ sa
4. ______________ či
5. ______________ ǰi
6. ______________ ǰe
7. ______________ že
8. ______________ še
9. ______________ se
10. ______________ še
11. ______________ zowo
12. ______________ žowo
13. ______________ sii
14. ______________ šii
15. ______________ čii
16. ______________ kpaza
17. ______________ masa
18. ______________ tiča
19. ______________ baǰi
20. ______________ žošo

18. ɣ vrs g

1. ______________ ga
2. ______________ ga
3. ______________ ɣa
4. ______________ ɣa
5. ______________ ɣi
6. ______________ ɣu
7. ______________ gu
8. ______________ ɣu
9. ______________ ɣe
10. ______________ ɣɔ
11. ______________ saɣa
12. ______________ gaɣa
13. ______________ ɣili
14. ______________ gili
15. ______________ ɣale
16. ______________ ɣale
17. ______________ paɣa
18. ______________ paga
19. ______________ paɣɔ
20. ______________ pagɔ

Suprasegmental Drills

19. Long vrs Short Vowels

1. ______________ babaa
2. ______________ baaba
3. ______________ sasasaa
4. ______________ saasasa
5. ______________ sasaasaa
6. ______________ sɔɔla
7. ______________ teveea
8. ______________ masagii
9. ______________ fiibɛɛ
10. ______________ saagɔ
11. ______________ tilaa
12. ______________ tiilaa
13. ______________ tasaata
14. ______________ kpaasagii
15. ______________ mukulu
16. ______________ maanɛɛvɛ
17. ______________ niinɛi
18. ______________ bɔvɛlaale
19. ______________ kooligii
20. ______________ pagɔ

20. Nasalized vrs Oral Vowels

1. ______________ ba
2. ______________ bã
3. ______________ babã
4. ______________ bãba
5. ______________ lamãã
6. ______________ lamaa
7. ______________ lãmaa
8. ______________ lamaa
9. ______________ tɔlĩlĩ
10. ______________ tutita
11. ______________ kãlã
12. ______________ kala
13. ______________ põõ
14. ______________ pɛ̃ɛ̃soe
15. ______________ mãdigo
16. ______________ sɔ̃ɔ̃ti
17. ______________ wĩĩgii
18. ______________ pɔkɔpa
19. ______________ pivugii
20. ______________ mũlũba

21. High Tone vrs Low Tone

1. ______________ bába
2. ______________ bábà
3. ______________ bàbá
4. ______________ bàbà
5. ______________ bábà
6. ______________ títí
7. ______________ tìtì
8. ______________ kǔlú
9. ______________ kúlù
10. ______________ kúlú
11. ______________ tátàtá
12. ______________ tátátà
13. ______________ tàtátá
14. ______________ tàtátà
15. ______________ tàtàtà
16. ______________ kákátá
17. ______________ tákákà
18. ______________ màmámá
19. ______________ màmámà
20. ______________ kúlùkú

22. High Tone, Low Tone and Downstep

1. ______________ bábá
2. ______________ bábà
3. ______________ báꜜbá
4. ______________ bábàꜜbá
5. ______________ bábàbá
6. ______________ kòꜜkókó
7. ______________ kòꜜkóꜜkó
8. ______________ kúlúꜜlù
9. ______________ fúlúꜜfú
10. ______________ pùlìgì
11. ______________ tàꜜtátá
12. ______________ tàꜜtátà
13. ______________ tátátá
14. ______________ tátáꜜtá
15. ______________ táꜜtátá
16. ______________ kákáꜜtà
17. ______________ tákàꜜtá
18. ______________ málálá
19. ______________ gáꜜlíꜜgá
20. ______________ púꜜlúlúꜜlú

23. High, Low, Rising, Falling

1. ______________ bábà
2. ______________ bábâ
3. ______________ bábá
4. ______________ bàbá
5. ______________ bàbǎ
6. ______________ bàbâ
7. ______________ bâbà
8. ______________ bábâ
9. ______________ bǎbá
10. ______________ bǎbǎ
11. ______________ tátâ
12. ______________ tátâtà
13. ______________ tâtàtà
14. ______________ tàtàtǎ
15. ______________ tǎtátá
16. ______________ tàtàá
17. ______________ táàtá
18. ______________ tàtàá
19. ______________ tátàà
20. ______________ tàátàá